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NEW Gallery, Newnham
Exhibition Artist: Dr Sue Henderson
Exhibition Curator: Dr Malcom Bywaters
Exhibition Dates: 19 August – 27 September 2013

Dr Sue Henderson

Dr Sue Henderson works with various media on paper ranging from large-scale ink paintings to ephemeral works and installation. Her arts practice references ways of interacting with places, with recent work exploring the perceptions of a rock climber in the landscape. Sue was recipient of a University medal in 2006, graduated with a PhD in visual arts in 2010 and currently is the Head of Drawing at the Tasmanian College of the Arts (Inveresk), University of Tasmania, Launceston.



Of latitude and l'attitude

Lying flat on the floor, face up, in a darkening room. The gimbal that is my inner ear rocks slowly, reassuringly, as my eyes adjust to a new perspective on walls, doors and furnishings, strong verticals creating juxtapositions of solids quietly morphing into subtle abutments of flattened tones as daylight recedes. Eyes close and the gimbal is stilled: the relationship of body to space is now the touch of spine, shoulders, legs, cranium on floor. The air quality somehow reminds me of the presence of the ceiling, some three metres above, while in the universe behind my eyelids I find the strange freshness of a starry night in the deep quiet of an exterior landscape. It is in this *latitude* (posture, behaviour) that I have come to understand my experience of Sue Henderson's re-visioning of Cataract Gorge.

The affection of *latitude* is a slight but important concordance with *géographie* (geography) a description written or otherwise visually captured, of this earth (or part of it), or the layout and arrangement of rooms in a building. In papering the walls of the arrangement of broken spaces that make up the NEW Gallery and its approaches, Henderson has negotiated a landscape beyond the gallery, drawing on the complexity of a geography that she has encountered in an intimate corporeality as rock climber and as artist. This *géographie*, in its documentation of a natural place, references *Le Géographie*, under Baudin's captaincy, surveying the coastline of this island in 1803 while simultaneously recording minutiae of the natural world encountered on shore. Triangulation, in the service of survey, of bringing a view into view (so to speak) also recalls its iteration in David Jones's 2003 installation, *Soulevement - Triangulaire - Point de vue (2)*, at Alum Cliffs Tulampanga, a triangulation formed of rock and wood, lifted above the earth, marking three view-points: the Tulampanga rocks platforms, Western Bluff and Quamby Bluff, denoting geographies both Aboriginal and European, presented in the language of Baudin.

Walking through the papering of architecture-as-landscape that is the *géographie* of the NEW Gallery, a formal triangulation is not immediately obvious, is not laid out as a map or a description, but is rather a dislocated bivouac on uneven ground. No large floating form directing contemplation of the surrounding land here. There is no view, nothing on the horizon from which to take bearings. Landscapes form and re-form, are re-visioned, as verticals, and as horizontals, as longitudes and latitudes. I close my eyes, briefly. But almost immediately, and now taking advantage of the latitude – width, breadth, scope – made available through *latitude* of the body in negotiating the spaces, there is an awareness of paper, ink, paint, and *graph* activating a surface, that like a chart before a mark is made is largely without any but the most banal directions; an apparent compass point, or perhaps some signage (Surveillance camera in use). Travelling (by eye, on foot) past tree columns, some with vertiginous surfaces visually receding into the walls beyond, others reaching up into lighter spaces beyond immediate view, leads to encounters with Baudin-esque investigations of what must be the cross sections of living things, or the crustose growth of lichen. Land sweeps up and down the walls in overview, mimicking both the flight path and output of an aerial survey. Immediately tilted into the burrows of hallways and around columns, the reciprocities between spaces, the tonal segues, the textural creasings that appear as fault lines at odds with their own geology, are continually accentuated by the gimbal effect.

The space for the re-visioning Cataract Gorge resonates with what is outside, the breadth (*latitude*) of its landscape at first confusing in its complexity. It is a bodily experience that requires taking a stance (*latitude*) and changing it, often. In these marks, recordings and interpretations, Sue Henderson has laid down her own *géographie*.

Dr Deborah Malor



