Of latitude and attitude

Lying flat on the floor, face up, in a darkening room. The gimbals that my inner ear rocks slowly, reassuringly, as my eyes adjust to a new perspective on walls, doors and furnishings, strong verticals creating disorientations of solids shifting and morphing into subtle abstractions of flattened tones as daylight recedes. Eyes close and the gimbals are tilted, 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 beyond 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 giosphé (geography) a description written or otherwise visually captured, of this earth (or part of it), or the layout and changing it, often. In these marks, (latitude) that I have come to understand my experience of Sue Henderson’s re-visioning of Cataract Gorge.

Walking through the papering of architecture-as-landscape that is the giosphé of the NEW Gallery, a formal triangulation is not immediately obvious, is not laid out as a map or in 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-visualised, 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 graphically a surface, that like a chart before a mark is marked largely without any but the most banal directions; an apparent compass point, or perhaps some signature (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 signarcs between spaces, the tonal segues, the burrows of hallways and around columns, the texts of the ceiling, some three metres above, while in the universe beyond 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.

Dr Deborah Malor
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.