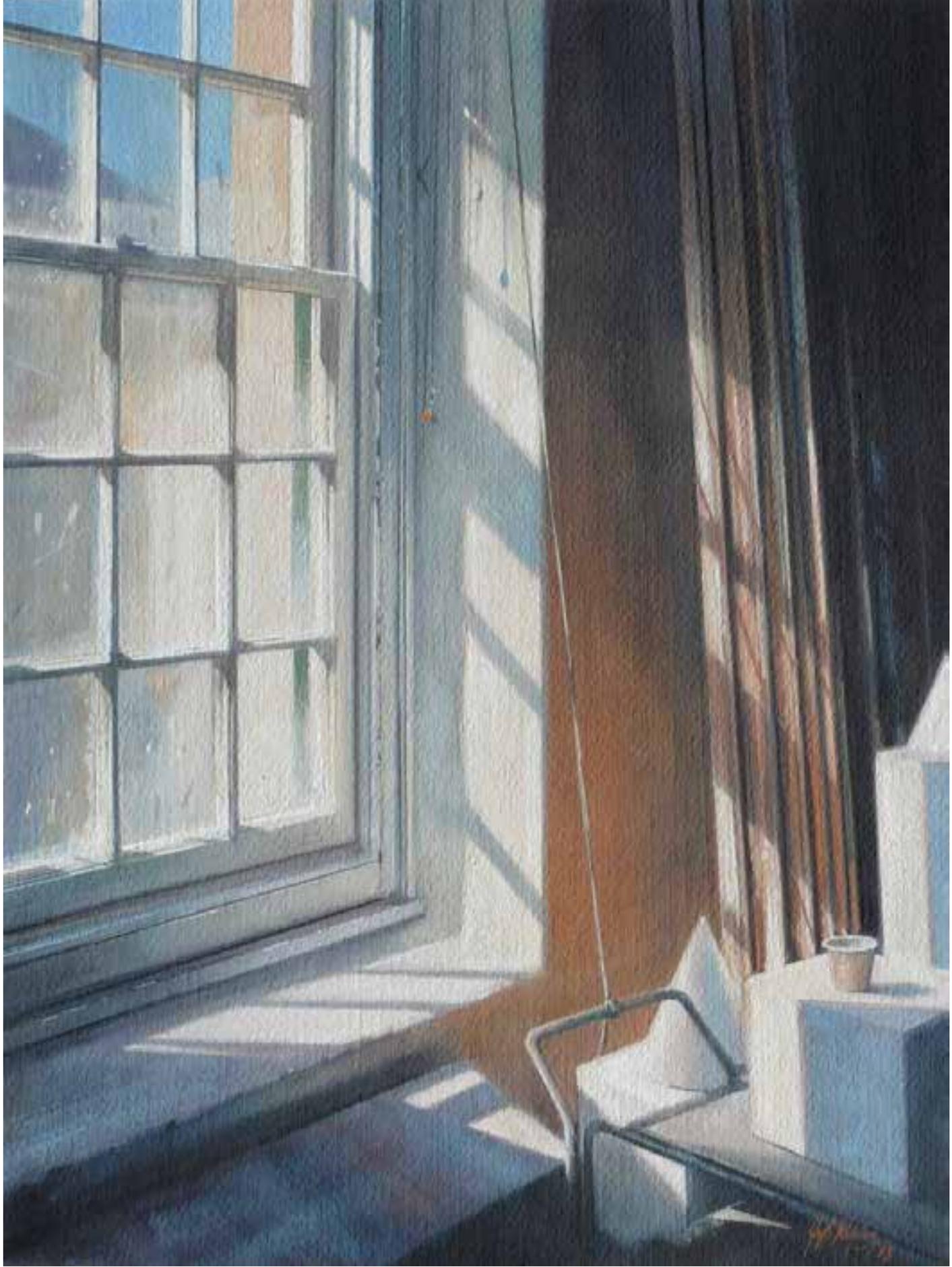
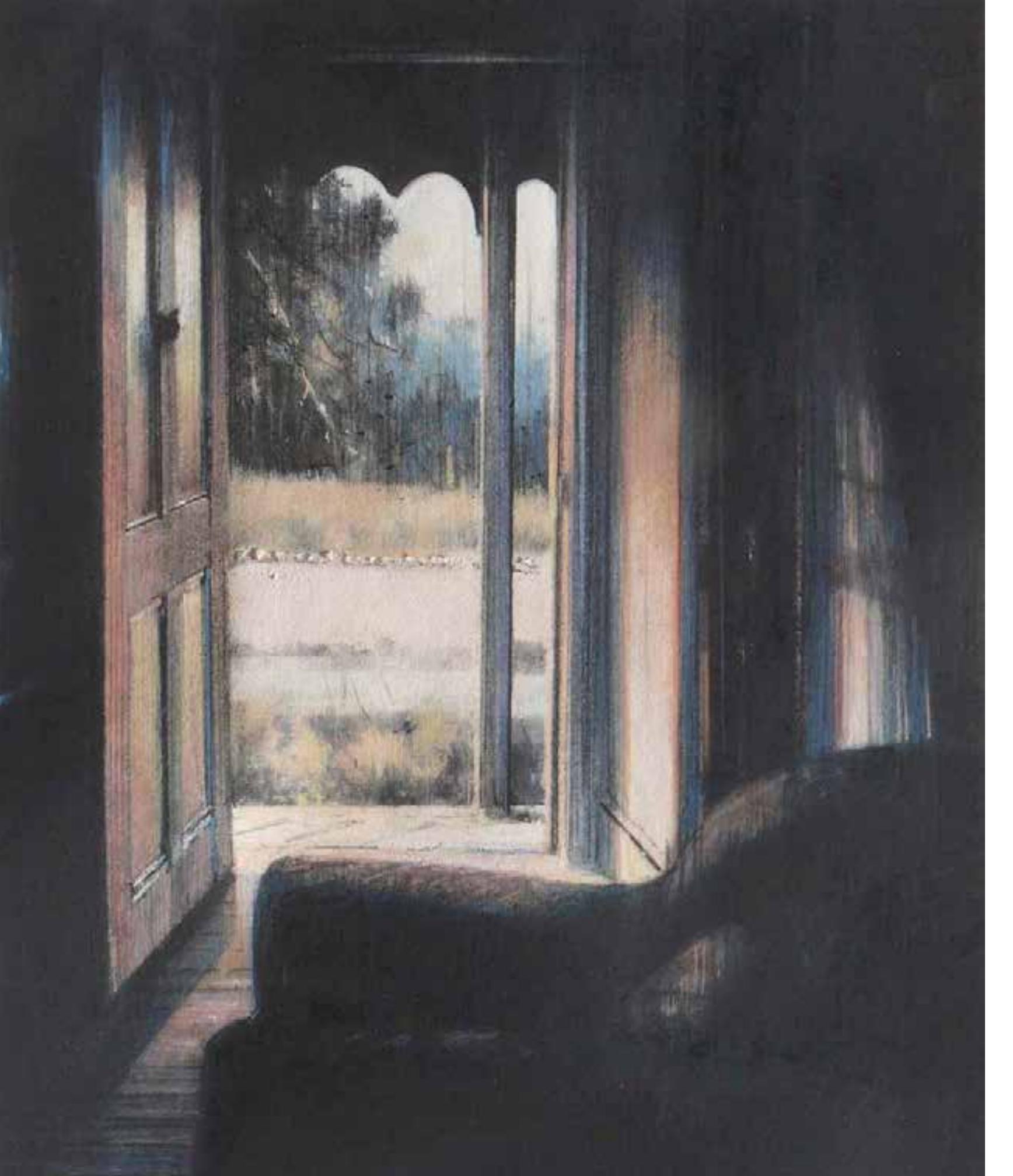


Jeff Rigby: Studio 26.I, NAS 37 x 28 cms gouache



# INSIDE OUT

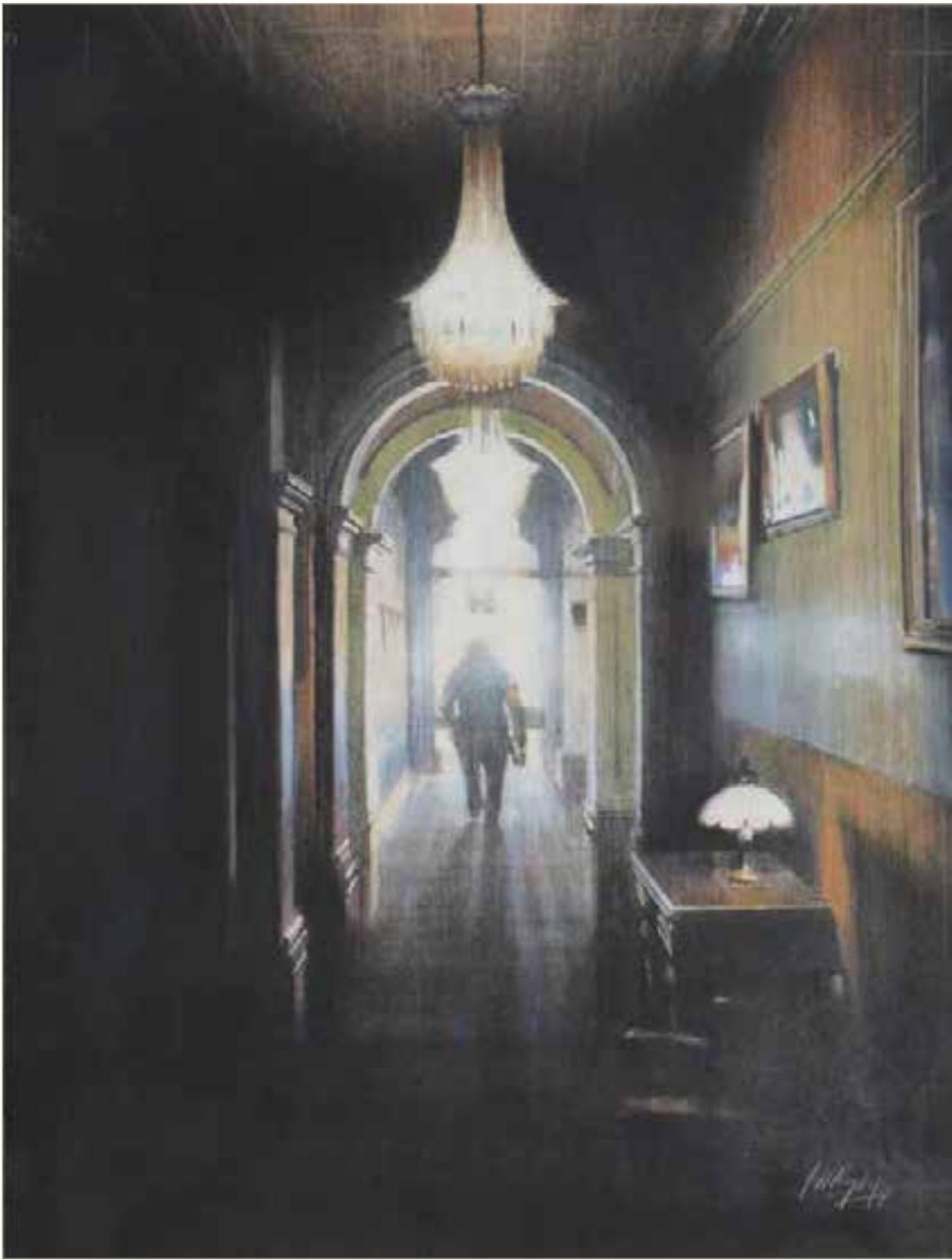
JEFF RIGBY



Jeff Rigby: Front Door, Bryants Butchery, Hill End 28 x 37cm

Jeff Rigby 2016

Jeff Rigby: Corridor, Carrington Hotel. 42 x 33 cms



After so many decades we are still very familiar with the crime fiction of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, so memorably translated into film by Howard Hawks and John Huston and now probably the best known examples of the seemingly timeless genre of Film Noir.

We tend to think of the 1930s as the high water mark of black and white photography and movie film but even now it is still an extremely powerful medium. Without the distraction of colour, its sumptuous tonal gradations and mysterious shadows continue to haunt us and indeed this is at the very heart of the term Film Noir: It is the tonal expression of sustained tension, of impending action

and relentless anxiety expressing the darker side of the human condition and yet the genre is also remarkable for the possibility of optimism, the offer of hope and romance, the triumph of Good over Evil as a counterpoint and compensation for all this bleakness.

Edward Hopper was a great lover of movies and they provided a welcome diversion at times when he was unable to paint, but it is difficult to say whether his pictures were a response to them or whether he regarded the movies as an affirmation of his own aesthetic. Whatever the truth, there is no doubt that many film directors and painters have made direct references to his images and continue





Opposite: Jeff Rigby, The Front Bar, Palisade Hotel 28 x 37 cms acrylic on canvas

Right: Jeff Rigby, Corridor, Rouse Hill House 52 x 35 cms charcoal-wash

to do so fifty years after his death. Ridley Scott's dystopian *Blade Runner* of 1982, its successor *Blade Runner 2049* and the films of the Coen brothers amongst many others, give full expression to the genre despite the use of colour and modern technology.

As a child who drew constantly, I have clear memories of black and white "B Grade" movies as well as the great film noir classics that were still relentlessly shown on TV. In addition my family had many copies of the *US Camera* and *Deutsche Lichtbild* magazines from the late 1930s and the beauty of those dramatic black and white photographs always moved me, their subtle tonality now seems far removed from the harsher products of modern photographic systems and lenses. Their subjects too were fascinating as war threatened in 1938 and 1939, images of America's industrial might (which I think helped inform my later interest in industrial imagery) and the Nazi Nuremberg Rallies and Torch Light Parades, truly the stuff of Film Noir.

The creation and definition of form, pictorial structure and probably a sense of time ultimately depends on light. My early pictures were certainly about light but contained few tonal passages. They tended to be uncompromising statements of realism, the sun blazing high in a cloudless sky with buildings, rocks and trees revealed in sharp clarity. They asked few questions of the viewer although the position of the sun permanently fixed at high noon could have inferred some sort of metaphysical possibility.

In later years however, with the inevitable onset of age and the gradual acceptance of uncertainty, the question of time and mood slowly emerges but light is always the major element. With a declining sun and lengthening shadows, subjects can become more diffused, edges can be lost and details quietly submerged. As a draughtsman I am acutely aware of the power of tonality especially through the use of charcoal, a medium that can fully realise rich gradations of tone and lustrous, mysterious blacks.



It may be that this increasing tonality began to lead away from the brilliant light of day to that of more enclosed spaces. A building's doors and windows seem to beckon the viewer inside. A candle, a lamp or even a powerful electric light may struggle against the darkness, creating mysterious diffusions of shadows deepening into the corners of rooms and a sense of drama and psychological tension.

The realisation finally came to me one day when artist and teaching colleague Peter Sharp credited my drawings with having a Film Noir quality and I immediately recognised the relationship in terms of my own history and sensibilities. Many years later, *Inside Out* is an attempt to explore these things but perhaps the light and endless space of landscape will always be a welcome relief to what is the fascinatingly mysterious but edgy claustrophobia of interior space.

*Inside Out* An exhibition of interiors and exteriors November 2017  
at the Robin Gibson Gallery Darlinghurst Sydney