**ROBERT CLINCH 1947 –**

*147 Easey Street* 1993

gouache, watercolour and dry brush on paper

45 x 28.5 cm

signed lower right: R Clinch 93

***Provenance:***

the artist

private collection, Melbourne

***Exhibited:***

*Fanfare for the Common Man: The Art of Robert Clinch*, Art Gallery of Ballarat, 13 July - 8 Sep 2013 & touring to Wollongong City Gallery

***Literature:***

*Robert Clinch: Fanfare for the Common Man*, Art Gallery of Ballarat, 2013, p.42, col. illus. p.45

Tom Prior, *They Trusted Men: The Untold Story of the Easey Street Murders*,Wilkinson Books, 1996 (cover image)

147 Easey Street in Collingwood, Melbourne, was the location of the notorious Easey Street murders of January 1977, when two young women in their twenties were brutally stabbed to death. Suzanne Armstrong and Susan Bartlett were found three days after their murder when neighbours heard a baby crying in the house. The murder remains unsolved.

As with much of Clinch’s work there is much more to be found than meets the eye at an initial glance. Whilst the unassuming terrace house appears to be depicted much as it was in photographs of the time, Clinch’s rendition invokes a narrative. The bicycle with toddler seat propped on the front porch is a poignant reminder of the orphaned 16 month-old child. The imposing, solid bricked-in windows refer to the absence of any witnesses to the murder. The two female gargoyle ornaments on the small house are screaming silently.

This artwork contains a number of Clinch’s quintessential hallmarks: meticulous execution and attention to detail and using the urban landscape as a metaphoric vehicle. Although is imagery is realistic, the settings of his artworks are chosen not only for their visual appeal but more importantly, their symbolic content.

Robert Clinch is one of Australia’s leading realist artists and was the subject of a major touring retrospective, curated by the Art Gallery of Ballarat in 2013. His work is represented both in Australia and internationally in public and private collections, including the National Gallery of Victoria; the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Library of Australia. He has exhibited regularly since the late 1980s and undertaken numerous commissions.

In 1996, the artist's father-in-law, Tom Prior, published *They Trusted Men*, a book about the unsolved case and used Robert's depiction of the terrace house as the cover image.

This work has a strong connection with the City of Yarra through the depiction of a typical terrace house in Collingwood and the link to an infamous story that pervades the cultural and historical identity of the area to this day. The artwork is framed and ready for display and is of an intimate enough size suitable to numerous venues.