

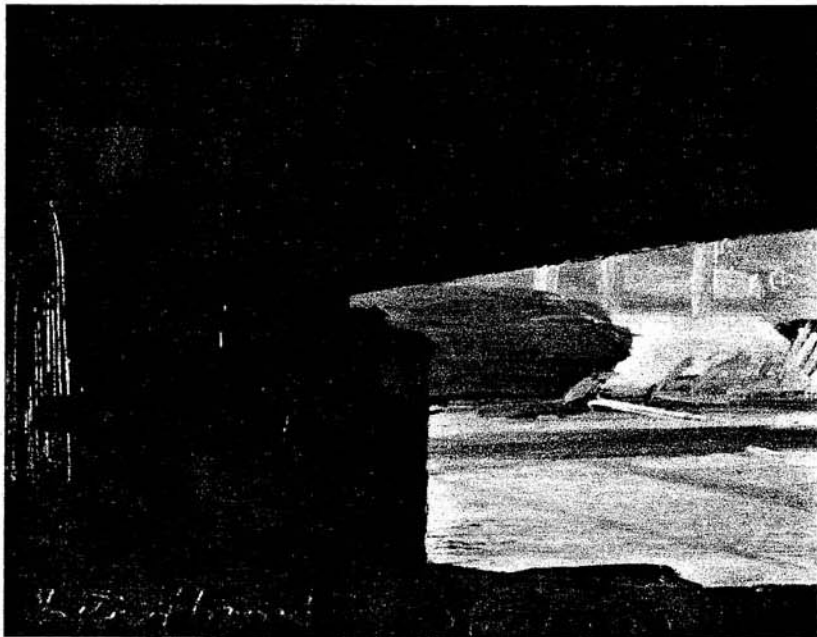
NEW YORK REVIEWS

RICHARD SHEEHAN

Allan Stone

SHEEHAN's motifs are the bridges in shabby industrial sections of the Greater Boston area. The titles of the works may include the name of the street or neighborhood, the season or the time of day. The artist seems to delight in squat, workman-like structures that nonetheless become the stuff of high drama. Most often he focuses on one of the bridge's supports, using slashes of thick, shiny oil paint to show dramatic shadows or streaks of light that suggest specific weather or the time of day. He is particularly fond of capturing a late afternoon or early evening when bright pink and orange light flashes across the ground.

The best works are those in which well-defined structural elements create a sense of volume, anchoring the brushwork, which seems to want to go off on its own. In *Bridge Steel* (1986), for example, the side of a steel support adorned with criss-cross bracing (the painting is cropped so that the bridge itself is never seen) covers the surface from top to bottom at the center of the painting. It shoots back into space in sharp perspective, directing the eye to pale buildings looming ghostlike in the background. In *Late Afternoon* (1985), a



Richard Sheehan, *Late Afternoon*, 1985, oil on canvas, 14 by 18 inches. Allan Stone.

smaller work, the mood is softer and more mellow. The space is defined by the underside of a dark-colored bridge that springs off a blunt cubic support to reveal the soft

pinks and yellows of a setting sun. Thus scenes that might seem at first to be mundane and dull become occasions for compelling works of art. —R.B.