



Stills from *Billy in the Lowground*, 16mm film, Mary Simpson and Fionn Meade, 2006



Tashiro/Kaplan Building, 119 Prefontaine Place S, Seattle, 206.621.1945
Gallery Hours: Noon-5pm Friday-Sunday, and by appointment
www.punchgallery.org

Billy in the Lowground

Punch Gallery, November 2—December 3, 2006
Opening Reception—Artwalk, Thursday, November 2, 5-8pm

Film Screening, Reading, and Live Music Performance
Wednesday, November 1, 8pm
Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Avenue, Seattle
www.nwfilmforum.org

Contact: Mary Simpson, info.simpson@gmail.com, 206.547.1701

BILLY IN THE LOWGROUND is a new film and installation by artist and filmmaker **Mary Simpson**, writer and musician **Fionn Meade**, and composer **Rob Millis**.

Inhabiting an 'in between' place not unlike Dante's dark wood or Alice's rabbit hole, *Billy in the Lowground* enters into and explores the rough corners of early American ballads as glimpsed and re-imagined through sound, gesture, and mise-en-scène.

Employing live action and real time sound recordings, *Billy in the Lowground* features a sound collaboration with **The Foghorn Stringband**. At the forefront of Portland's old-time music scene, Foghorn plays at leading festivals around the world. Other performers include **Amelia Reeber**, **Alice de Muizon**, **Hisham Mayet** and **Sedat Uysal**.

The installation includes a new film by Mary Simpson and Fionn Meade along with additional sound compositions from Rob Millis and new work by Mary Simpson.

Billy in the Lowground will premiere Wednesday, November 1 at the Northwest Film Forum to be followed by a short reading from Meade and a live performance by special musical guests The Foghorn String Band.

The installation opens the following evening, Thursday, November 2, with a reception during Artwalk from 5-8pm.

Billy in the Lowground is made possible, in part, through a '4 Culture Special Projects' grant and in-kind production support from Northwest Film Forum's Roll Camera 16mm Program. Fionn Meade will be presenting one of three new essays funded in part by the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs' 'City Artists' program. Additional in-kind support was provided by Flying Spot Film Transfer.



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Mary Simpson's practice isolates gestures, architectural overlays, and shifting perspectives and places them within the expanse of invented landscapes. Her recent projects include *Nocturnes*, a group show with artists Cat Clifford, Lucy Raven and Laleh Khorramian which will be reprised at the Boise Art Museum in 2007; *Release & Capture: Contemporary Paperworks* at the Kirkland Arts Center; and *Wait Until Spring, Brother*, a solo show at Gallery 4 Culture featuring works on paper as well as film and sound collaborations with composer Robin Holcomb and artist Steve Roden. She was chosen as one of The Stranger 2005 Genius Awards "Ones to Watch" and received a 2005 4Culture "Special Projects" grant. Simpson recently received a PONCHO Special Recognition Award from Seattle Art Museum's Betty Bowen Memorial Award Committee.

Fionn Meade is a writer, musician, and independent curator living in Seattle. Meade received his MFA from Columbia University and his writing has recently appeared in *Bomb Magazine*, *The Stranger*, *The Phillip Review* and *NYFA Current* among other publications. He received a 2006 City Artists award from Seattle's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs to present a series of three new essays this fall.

Rob Millis, a founding member of Climax Golden Twins, creates diverse record releases, new media installations, performances, and works for film and choreography. Featured among these is *Lovely*, released in 2002 and originally created as an immersive gallery installation, as well as the score for the feature film *Session Nine*. Millis has released two recent solo CDs documenting music from Asia (*Leaf Drunks*, *Distant Drums* on Anomalous Records and *Harmika Yab Yum: Folk Sounds from Nepal* on the Seattle-based Sublime Frequencies label). Climax Golden Twins' *Highly Bred & Sweetly Tempered* was recognized in Artforum's 2005 Best of Music. Millis received a 2005 Artist Trust Fellowship for music.

The Foghorn Stringband's (www.foghornmusic.com) instrumental line-up includes fiddle, banjo, mandolin, bass and guitar. Their style encompasses early country music, the fiddle repertoire of the Southern Appalachians and the Midwest, and the stringband sounds of the Piedmont region. The Foghorn Stringband sound is made up of the unison melody line of fiddler **Stephen "Sammy" Lind** and mandolinist **Caleb Klauder**. **P.T. Grover Jr.'s** three-finger picking style and resonator banjo sets their sound apart from other contemporary old-time bands. **Kevin Sandri** plays rhythm guitar with the snap of a snare drum and bass player **Brian Bagdonas** delivers a relentless driving beat that forms the underlying tone of Foghorn's sound. Caleb, Sammy, and Kevin also deliver a seamless blend of unadorned vocals. Together their music has an easy and natural style that comes from their stripped-down approach to performing live. This gives all of their live performances a front porch feel that draws in and connects with the audience like family.

