

## About Swallows

Swallows debut full length, *Me With Trees Towering* (LP 2006, Cherchez La Femme Projects), was recorded by Radio Sloan and received critical acclaim both locally and nationally in publications such as Performer Magazine, Punk Planet, Curve and Skyscraper. The album showcases the band's progressive pop structures and restructured rock landscapes and explores themes of self-enforced solitude, life changes and creative interpretation. The postmodern, psych-emotive rock duo formed in the Summer of 2003 when they converged in Portland, Oregon - Jon Miller (drums) from Western Massachusetts - Em Brownlowe (vocals, guitar) from San Diego.

The last two years have been exciting: The band completed two west coasts tours and participated in note-worthy local showcases featuring Two Ton Boa, Ninety-Nine, The Old Haunts, Scout Niblett, Anna Oxygen, Jen Wood, Rebecca Gates (ex-Spinnanes) and Swan Island. Swallows performed at the annual PDX Pop Now! festival 2006 and the first We Made This Portland Festival in August 2006. During the winter of 2006, Swallows collaborated with Canadian film maker Mark Kohl and the NW Film Center to create a music video for their hit, "Flight (Takeoff)", and a short documentary about the band's formation. Most recently, Swallows will open the stage for Team Dresch, who is reuniting to headline the first Siren Nation Festival (November 2, 2007).

On their next recording project, Swallows wanted to challenge themselves by developing a full live sound. They wrote new material, filling the new spaces with a guitar loop pedal and expounding on the intricate musicianship for which they are often commended. Their new 5 song EP, *Cloud Machines* is an unrefined, epic montage of textures, ancestral beats and astounding vocal layers. *Cloud Machines* will release on Church of Girl Records November 20, 2007.



Photo by Julia Laxer

## About Cloud Machines

During the summer of 2007, Swallows entered the home studio of Kipp Crawford and recorded the instrumentation of *Cloud Machines* in just two days. Em recorded her vocals on her own at Swallows rehearsal studio and delivered the tracks to Kipp to mix and master. About the process, Miller explained, "The recording feels really organic - but the songs are also way more rocking than anything we have done before". And Brownlowe added, "I remember reading artist philosopher's incite stating 'the most beautiful paintings are found when you close your eyes'. I truly feel this record is a manifestation of the sounds we envisioned in our minds".

On *Cloud Machines*, Swallows continue to expand the boundaries of their vision of pop music. Even though the material on the EP is darker than the collection of alt-pop/garage-infused tracks on their previous release, Swallows music continues to be rooted in the ideals of pop. The songs are sonic tales of the band's experiences as young queer musicians, the excitement of traveling, the pressures of pursuing the American Dream as well as personal relationships - all told with a dose of their endearing sense of humor. Experientially, the record is dense, rowdy, elevating and spaciouly arranged.

Both band mates took on new artistic challenges in the song arrangement and recording process. Prior to *Cloud Machines*, Brownlowe established her songwriting technique as a rhythm guitarist. The addition of the loop pedal in the song writing for the new EP allowed her to branch out and experiment with lead parts on top of the basic guitar tracks. Miller's melodic percussive style continues to be innovative filling out the lower register without the support of standard beats. He relates the duos work on *Cloud Machines* to the big switch in the late seventies when bands like Patti Smith and The Raincoats made the switch from punk to world/dance/ tribal/jazz influenced work. "I feel like I can see a real mirror between that and what has been happening in our own song writing," Jon said.

For the artwork of *Cloud Machines*, Swallows wanted the artwork on the EP to echo the nature of their music. They commissioned Andrew Roberts to create a desolate industrial world being championed by neon colored birds. The title 'Cloud Machines' is based on an explanation Jon's parents gave him as a child when they drove from their rural NJ home into Philadelphia or NYC. "There are these massive industrial rigs all along the highway, and they churn out a TON of smog and steam. At night they have thousands of yellow lights shining all over them and it is really menacing, but in a way, very beautiful. My parents told me that this was where clouds came from: Cloud Machines. Every time we would drive by them, I would smile."