

REVIEWED BY CATHI UNSWORTH

24.11.10 SOUNDS

# SINGLE OF THE WEEK

## ULTRA VIVID SCENE

**'Special One' (4AD)** As ever, Ultra Vivid Scene make beautiful weirdness. On the title track of this EP, Kurt Ralske deadpans, *"My sanity comes and goes with the weather/In that respect I should have known better"*, while Pixie Kim Deal cries, *"How do you think it feels"* over and over in a voice as sweet as strychnine.

Ralske steps into a nightmare softly, as what seems to be blasé and cheerful on the surface, gradually becomes deeply disturbing.

Beside 'Special One' is a remix of 'Lightning' from the 'Joy' album. It's pure technicolour ambience, best enjoyed levitating to a backdrop of oil colour slides.

But the EP's finest, most idiosyncratic moment is 'Kind Of A Drag' on the flip. Powered by what sounds decidedly like the sampled John Bonham powerkick opening to 'When The Levee Breaks', the atmosphere is formed from warped, cut up Irish fiddle. Ralske's voice hardens as the tension mounts; *"I'd rather have a kiss in '45"*, he growls mysteriously. How all this works together is bordering on unspoken genius.

The EP ends with the excellently titled 'A Smile And A Deathwish', another creepy manifestation that preys on your vulnerability. The paranoid vision is never dropped, and the Ralske voice, a powerful and versatile instrument in its own right, shimmies into best George Harrison nasal drone. The record cuts out, and you hear him gasp, twice, as if they were his last breaths. Frightening.



KURT RALSKE: deeply disturbing