

Olivia Block  
The Mountains Pass



## OLIVIA BLOCK The Mountains Pass

Label

**BLACK TRUFFLE**

Format

**LP**

Catalog Number

**BT 117LP**

EAN

4250101464676



Store Price

**\$21.99**

Release Date

**04/26/24**

Territory

**NORTH AMERICAN EXCLUSIVE**

Genre

**FILE UNDER - B - EXPERIMENTAL**



### DESCRIPTION

Black Truffle announces *The Mountains Pass*, a major new work from **Olivia Block**. A key player in Chicago's vibrant experimental music scene since the late 1990s, Block has developed an extensive body of work grounded in a personalized, at times emotive approach to the studio-based practices of the musique concrète tradition, while also encompassing improvisation, orchestral pieces, sound installations, and a sustained engagement with the piano. On *The Mountains Pass*, recorded by **Greg Norman** at **Steve Albini's** Electrical Audio and meticulously edited and constructed over the course of three years, Block pushes into new terrain, introducing her singing voice and drums played by **Jon Mueller** into flowing assemblages that move seamlessly from ruminative organ tones and fragmented piano airs to explosions of sizzling synths and thundering percussion. Like many of Block's past works, which include, for example, a sculptural installation using the sound of oyster beds, *The Mountains Pass* draws inspiration from nature and the animal world. Time spent in a particular mountain range in Northern New Mexico informs this suite of pieces, whose lyrics and titles refer particularly to animal life in the area. The music sometimes suggests the great outer-limits works of '70s Italian prog figures like **Franco Battiato** or **Arturo Stalteri** in the languorous drift of synthesizer, organ, and piano tones and the meticulous yet organic flow of its construction. Block's crystalline voice and rich piano chords at times call up the restrained chamber songs of **Janet Sherbourne**, but fragmented and threaded through passages of woozy pitch-bent keyboards, hypnotic distant thuds, tinkling bells, and searing distorted synth tones. On "f2754," the freedom of the roaming wolf surges through dense layers of rapid keyboard attacks and long organ tones over a propulsive drum performance straight out of *Animal Magnetism*-era **Arnold Dreyblatt**. This distinctive sound world is then reencountered in a darkened mirror image in the uneasy, metallic shimmer of the closing "Ungulates," named in reference to a heard of elk roaming through the mountains. Like **Battiato's** *Clic* or **Gastr del Sol's** *Upgrade & Afterlife*, *The Mountains Pass* inhabits the underexplored terrain where the beauty of song coexists with a radical formal openness, illuminating the deep musicality and warmth that have been present in Block's work all along.

### TRACKLISTING

- A1. Northward (2:51)
- A2. The Hermit's Peak (12:40)
- B1. Violet-Green (9:23)
- B2. f2754 (6:31)
- B3. Ungulates (3:37)

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Black Truffle announces *The Mountains Pass*, a major new work from **Olivia Block**.
- On *The Mountains Pass*, Block pushes into new terrain, introducing her singing voice and drums played by **Jon Mueller** into flowing assemblages that move seamlessly from ruminative organ tones and fragmented piano airs to explosions of sizzling synths and thundering percussion.
- RIYL: **Franco Battiato**, **Arturo Stalteri**, **Janet Sherbourne**, **Battiato**, **Gastr del Sol**.

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