

Science. Technology. Two words thoroughly embedded in the lexicon of electronic music. Often they reflect to the sci-fi aspirations of the producer, or the ever-evolving machines in the studio. Rarely are they so integral to the everyday life of the artist.

As a practicing mechanical design engineer, modulex has pored over the high speed film of vehicle crash tests, and conceptualized stroke intervention devices. He has developed pain control delivery systems and laboratory test mechanisms. Innovation and technological advance are part of the everyday, not just samples from a futuristic film.

Modulex (D.R. Elsie) grew up in Lansing, Michigan, roughly 90 miles from Detroit. As with so many young listeners near that epicenter of techno, he was exposed to the first wave of artists who were creating a new sound the late eighties. Unlike several of those listeners, Mr. Elsie did not trade his worldly possessions for a drum machine, but instead got a university education and started a distinctly non-musical career. As the next wave of Midwestern producers emerged, including artists such as Carl Craig and Plastikman (Richard Hawtin), Mr. Elsie came back to the music.

In 2003, working under the name of modulex, Mr. Elsie provided a few compositions to serve as the unofficial score of a dramatic production in Chicago. Following that breakthrough, he concentrated on finishing several tracks already under development. These would become the basis of his debut full-length recording.

A few standout tracks make *Trajectory Sketches* a solid, memorable debut. *Sickness: Recovery* is a modern electro gem, with a loving wink to early digital synths. The restless melodic lines evoke the Kraftwerk classic *Trans Europe Express*, and a cascade of hihats worthy of Jeff Mills descends upon the climax. The aptly titled *Velodrome* is a speed ride bristling with an insistent, almost clavinet-like riff. More traditional songwriting skills are on display in the midtempo *Transit Cop*. The clipped, stuttering drums and martial bassline of *VC6377* offset a warm cocoon of electronic strings, setting precision against melancholy. *Painted by Radar*, perhaps the best track, unfolds across a wide screen, creating the sort of cinematic electro found on the Underground Resistance (UR) label.

Overall, *Trajectory Sketches* proves once again that artists can pay respect to their record collections, without merely recycling the ideas behind them. The sketches here may start out in a familiar medium, but there is something undeniably fresh about the completed work.



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