



'Medusa' detail of Geddes lecture notes courtesy of University of Strathclyde, photo by Lorens Holm

A Septic Turn

Paul Guzzardo

A Septic Turn offers a contemporary update on Geddes' citizen survey and Civic Exhibition. The installation details an ongoing lawsuit between the plaintiff Paul Guzzardo and two defendants: Grand Center - a private corporation with statutory development powers in St. Louis, and Washington University - a bio-science research institution. Unlike Charles Dickens's Bleak House the transactional is secondary here. This is about the role of digital media in collective consciousness and how media shapes the relation of people to places. It's also about Marshall McLuhan's role in the intellectual formation of St. Louis, and how Geddes' synoptic vision got muscled out by a sycophantic one.

Project journals and looping multimedia tell the story. The journals contains press, legal pleadings and testimony. Guzzardo's documentaries and video depositions comprise the multimedia. The documentaries are *buildbetterbarrel*, *the cartographer's dilemma*, and *posses | protocol | perp walks*. The deposition witnesses are: Emily Pulitzer, collector and founder of the Pulitzer Foundation of the Arts; Heather Woofert, teacher and chair of graduate studies at the Washington University School of Architecture; and Paul Guzzardo, lawyer and media activist/artist.

Paul Guzzardo is a Fellow at the Geddes Institute for Urban Research. Further biography can be found in the project journals and multimedia.



View of panels and films at exhibition opening (above).

Following pages: Detail images of main panels.

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It is high time to be staging the civic drama, renewing its long-forgotten ideals. For as we escape from the myths of a homeless individualism we see that the city in one age with acropolis and forum, in another with town house and cathedral has ever been the theatre and stage indispensable for expressing, with any real fullness and adequacy, each individual life.

patrick geddes: cities in evolution

In the course of elaborating his fundamental graph, Geddes had in fact exposed the archetypal drama of life: and what was even more important had restored the missing factors of time and change. In the scenario for this drama the actors, the plot and the scenery, the dialogue, the performance, the setting actively bring into existence an interwoven sequence of events whose meaning and purpose no single part, however clearly presented, can possibly convey.

lewis mumford: on his mentor patrick geddes

Amphitheatres, open-air stages, and performance spaces in theaters and public halls are standard features in Geddes's city design reports. He suggests an amphitheater as early as 1904 in his report for Dunfermline and proposes one again in his last city design report from 1925 for Tel Aviv.

volker m. welter: biopolis

The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action.

hannah arendt: the human condition

Patrick Geddes was a message Huxley and Darwin sent to the future. He died in 1932; the same year Aldous Huxley published "Brave New World" - another dispatch. Geddes left us a tool chest packed with maps. They're maps to build platforms that glimpse, peer ahead, assess what is coming, and maybe humanize this new place.

holm-guzzardo: the cartographer's dilemma



Patrick Geddes was a man in search of archetypal drama(s) of life. Like Childe, he was a brute Hobbesian stage. Both men v

flat

a city is more than a place in space, it is a drama in time.

patrick geddes

The film strip is from a fragment of a lost silent film. It is thought to be based on *Bleak House*, and believed the first time a Dickens tale was adapted to film. The strip is survey kit, part of a Geddesian tool chest. It's used to map a descent into flat. It shows up in the Guzzardo book *Hackerspace for Myth Making - The Manual*, Chapter 6.



h of an arena that exposed the
arles Dickens he was a player on a
wanted to change the set.