

FrameWork 4/19

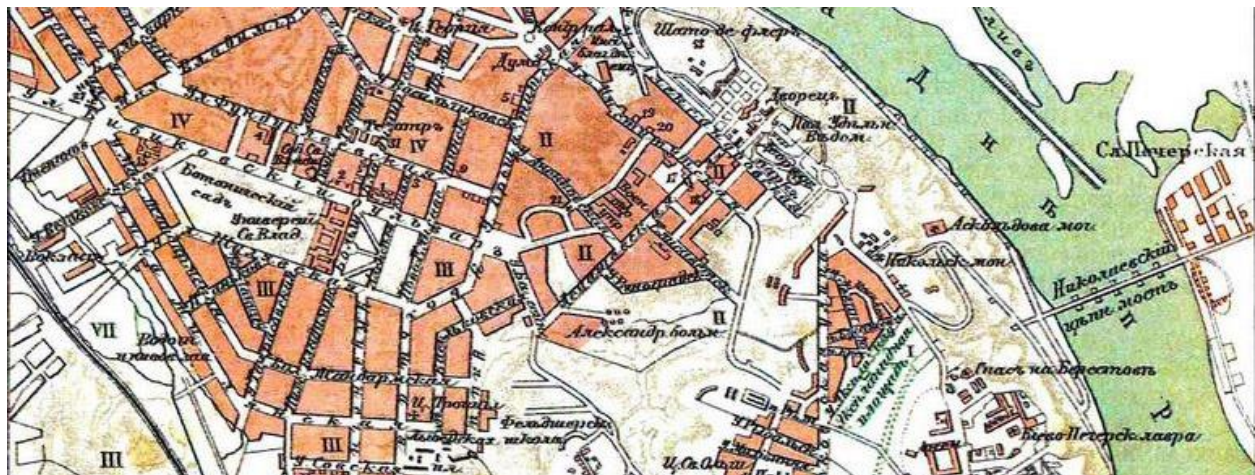
Kyle Buckley on Brian Groombridge

Recently a friend told me I was overly dependent on the map function on my phone for getting anywhere at all now. And added that measuring accuracy is just the belief that the degree to which we are mistaken about things is acceptable.

And then, on the appropriate Thursday night, I arrived at the Susan Hobbs Gallery on Tecumseth near where I work for the opening of a show by the artist Brian Groombridge.

The show is called *A condition connected with what is happening or has happened*. I looked at the work by Brian Groombridge. Then what I did amounts to being part of a kind of waiting game. I spent time in the gallery being around the art. It feels old fashioned or anachronistic, as though we should have found a way to speed up the process of observing art by now. I mingled with some other visitors to the gallery. I talked about work. I also drank a beer with the artist's son and we joked about how strange it was that he was tall enough to stand shoulder to shoulder with me. This was because I had met his son some years ago when he would have been much too young to drink that beer with me or with his father.

A condition connected with what is happening or has happened gave me a profound experience of anachronism. Not just like seeing a wristwatch on an actor who is playing Copernicus. But more beautifully confusing, like figuring out the formulations he made about the universe, only 18 centuries before Copernicus was born. The arrangement happens just in time to be out of time.



One of the works in the show is a poster that hangs on one of the gallery walls. It references the birthplace of avant-garde artist Kazimir Malevich in Kiev, as well as the home of the still-life painter Giorgio Morandi in Bologna. The astrologer Yuriy Drohobych was at one point named rector at the University of Bologna, and even lectured to Copernicus. A letter sent in 1478 contains his estimations of the exact time for two lunar eclipses, and calculations of the geographic locations of

major cities in now Poland and Ukraine. He wrote a treatise about a solar eclipse suggesting that it may or may not have favourable effects on earth, but certainly would not cause catastrophes.

A prominent sculpture in the middle of the show is comprised of metal stands. Affixed to the sculpture there are four short sentences, one that reads 'The sun is hell'. The sentence is perfectly anachronistic because it was believed once to be true. Just as the sun is inhabited, or the sun is made of ice. The invisible hand of the market will guide us. These statements are like strange coordinates on a map that negotiates accuracy over time.

Is an art gallery ever still considered a pedagogical space? That feels also like an idea that's out of step now. Or out of time. There is reason, however, to investigate the relationship between art and pedagogy. The show includes the words 'observe' and 'describe' painted multiple times in succession on the gallery's upstairs wall.

It was getting later in the evening. I'd arrived at the gallery right after work and I needed to have dinner. I am in the habit of ordering from a restaurant delivery service online. Frequently I stay at work late if I want to order dinner because the location of my work is more central and has a larger delivery radius than I get at my apartment. I read the menus from the restaurants carefully. I deliberate the options I have for probably a longer time than I reasonably need to.

I went back to work and I ordered dinner to be delivered. I can watch a computerized icon of a car move from a restaurant called Halal Chicken, down along specific streets, to where I am tracking it all on a computer screen. It's a very satisfying experience, like reading a superbly well-paced spy novel that is only 125 pages long. Outside it's raining. The icon of the car takes a slow turn (covering a proportionate distance influenced by city traffic) down a street I'm familiar with because of a shop where I'd go to get lunch during a time when I worked at a facility only a street away.



I spent the rest of the evening at home in my apartment. I had just recently paid to have my apartment cleaned by someone I didn't know. It kept raining. I poured myself some whiskey that I'd been saving, but I'm not sure for when exactly. Online I looked at pictures of the University of Bologna. The dorm rooms now look very sleek and modern. The pictures have the feeling of being an anachronism even without thinking about Yuriy Drohobych as the university rector in the 15th century. It looks more like a partially science fiction inspired futuristic city unto itself. I remember friends I grew up with who moved away to go to university in another city. Maybe it was because

they studied math that they ended up almost never leaving their dorms. The buildings became like an enclosed city for them. They went to and from the cafeteria, but they stayed inside, traded the math problems they worked on, and played increasingly complicated card games for days on end.

It is difficult to account for my time since I was at the Susan Hobbs Gallery for the opening of *A condition connected with what is happening or has happened*. Lately, the most ordinary routine of going out and coming home eclipses entire weeks at a time. I listened to a long voicemail left for me by my mother. She talked about a trip she was about to take and left the names of her hotels. I made another trip to the gallery. Daily I tried to reimagine the instructions to observe and to describe. There was at least one dinner party that left me leery of listening to anyone anymore. I know that's a distinctly ungenerous reaction. But despite any and every effort I made, I failed to prevent the conversation from being about whether or not the wine was worth what was paid for it. I don't know, is \$40 reasonable?

Trying to reinterpret the pattern of observe and describe seemed to me like the pattern of a question and answer. Such as, question: How long does it take? Answer: It always ends too soon. Or, this wine is nice, but how does it pair with late night television watched alone? Time will tell.

My friend who went to study math at university wrote this dialogue once when we were in high school together, and said he meant it to be about me:

Is the sky blue?

Yes.

No.

But ...

Stop right there. We've covered both possible answers, one of them has to be right.