



WOOLFF

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RUSSELL WEST

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The Woolff gallery is delighted to present Russell West's latest collection of artworks.

Russell West's knowledge and control of paint is a skill that cannot be taught. He has developed and mastered his unique style over the past 15 years by patiently experimenting with paint, the result being artworks which appear as an astonishing labyrinth of paint, each of which West has nurtured and encouraged into form.

These fascinating and complex artworks can take up to one year to create. In West's previous solo exhibition at Woolff gallery in March 2009 he introduced his concept entitled 'Slow Big Bang'. An uncannily similar image was later reported in November 2010 after scientists in Geneva had created a mini-big bang,

Russell West is a pioneer, his distinctive work is completely unrivalled and there really is no-one to compare him to. We hope you enjoy this exceptional exhibition.

NICK WOOLFF

RUSSELL WEST

"I suppose it must have been about 1987, while working as a graphic artist in London, that I stumbled across an image of the Kowloon walled city in a magazine. It looked to me as if a high rise town had been crushed into a brick by a giant machine. I was mesmerised. Tens of thousands of people – at its peak I believe it was as many as 33,000 – had crammed themselves into an area the size of two football pitches, where they lived and worked.

I settled in Hong Kong in 1991 and I visited the city many times before it was demolished by ball and chain in 1993. As the huge concrete ball was raised and dropped on the city at a height of about fourteen stories, the inner honeycomb of rooms and streets was revealed. There was an impossibly complex labyrinth riddled with electric wires and plumbing systems. The city had been built by its inhabitants for their needs without a town planner or architect involved. It occurred to me that I was looking at a genuine self-regulating 'man nest'.

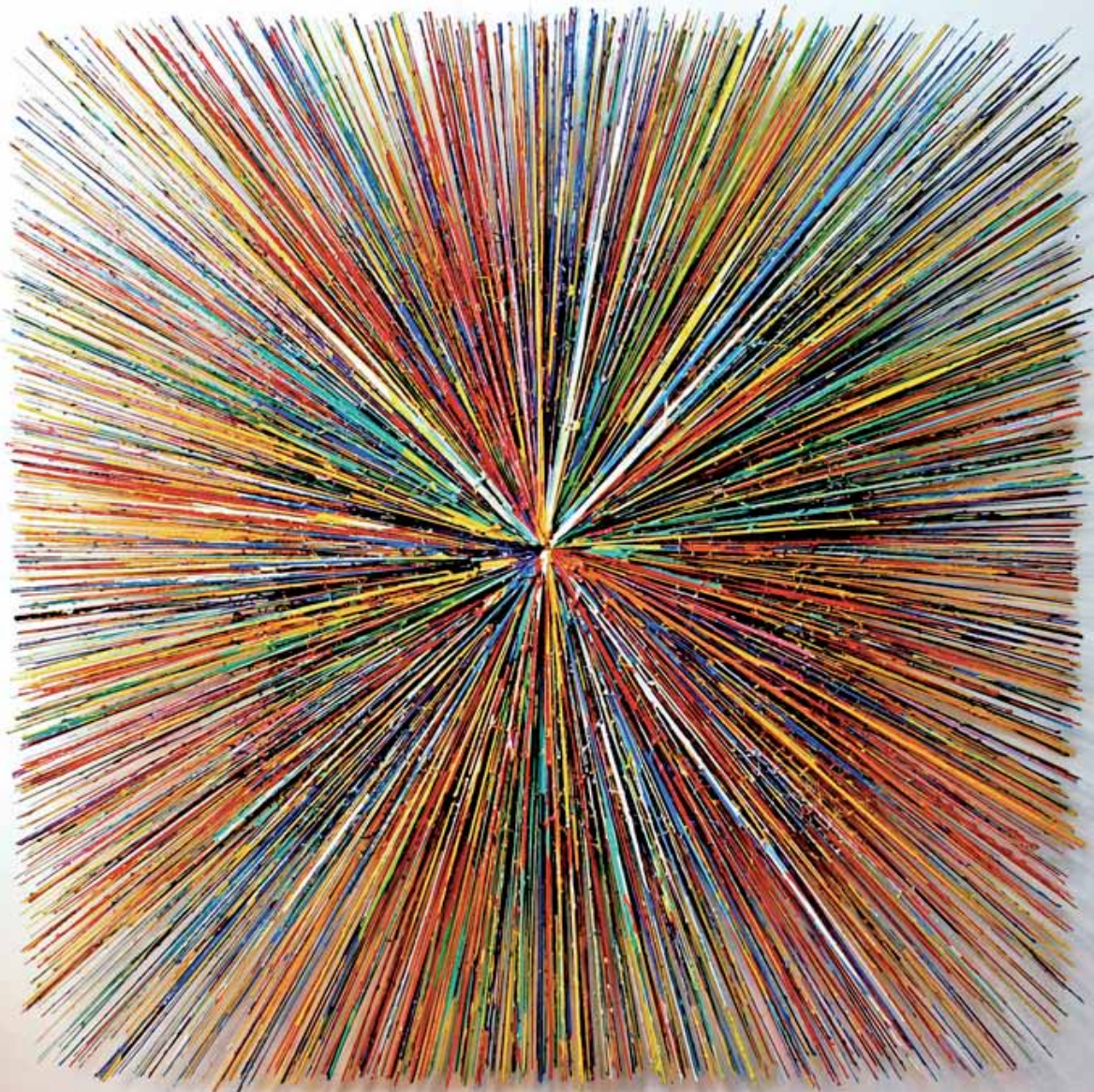
I find the complexity and patterns found in densely populated slums fascinating; I believe there is much to be learned from the layouts and mend-and-make-do technologies of the people that dwell within them. For example, there is a phenomenon known as a 'desire line' where unofficial paths emerge as people choose the quickest route in a municipal park, or through a flowerbed in a supermarket car park, rather than the one laid down for them by town planners. Slum dwellings are constructed in much the same way, guided by practicality rather than aesthetics, evolving organically. Doors and windows are placed where people need them, rather than where they should be.

Through photography, drawings and sculpture I have attempted many times over the years to recreate what I first saw in Kowloon's walled city, and later in India, the Philippines, and other parts of the world. The process I'm using at the moment is the best way I have found to represent what I saw in these slum neighbourhoods.

I use paint to produce solid planes of colour, to represent walls or signage. Once in place, the paint continues to move, dribbling serendipitously downward until it dries. It amuses me to think that at the end of every day, after locking up my studio for the night, my paintings continue to build themselves on their own in the dark in full colour, creating their desire lines"

RUSSELL WEST (b.Portsmouth 1964)

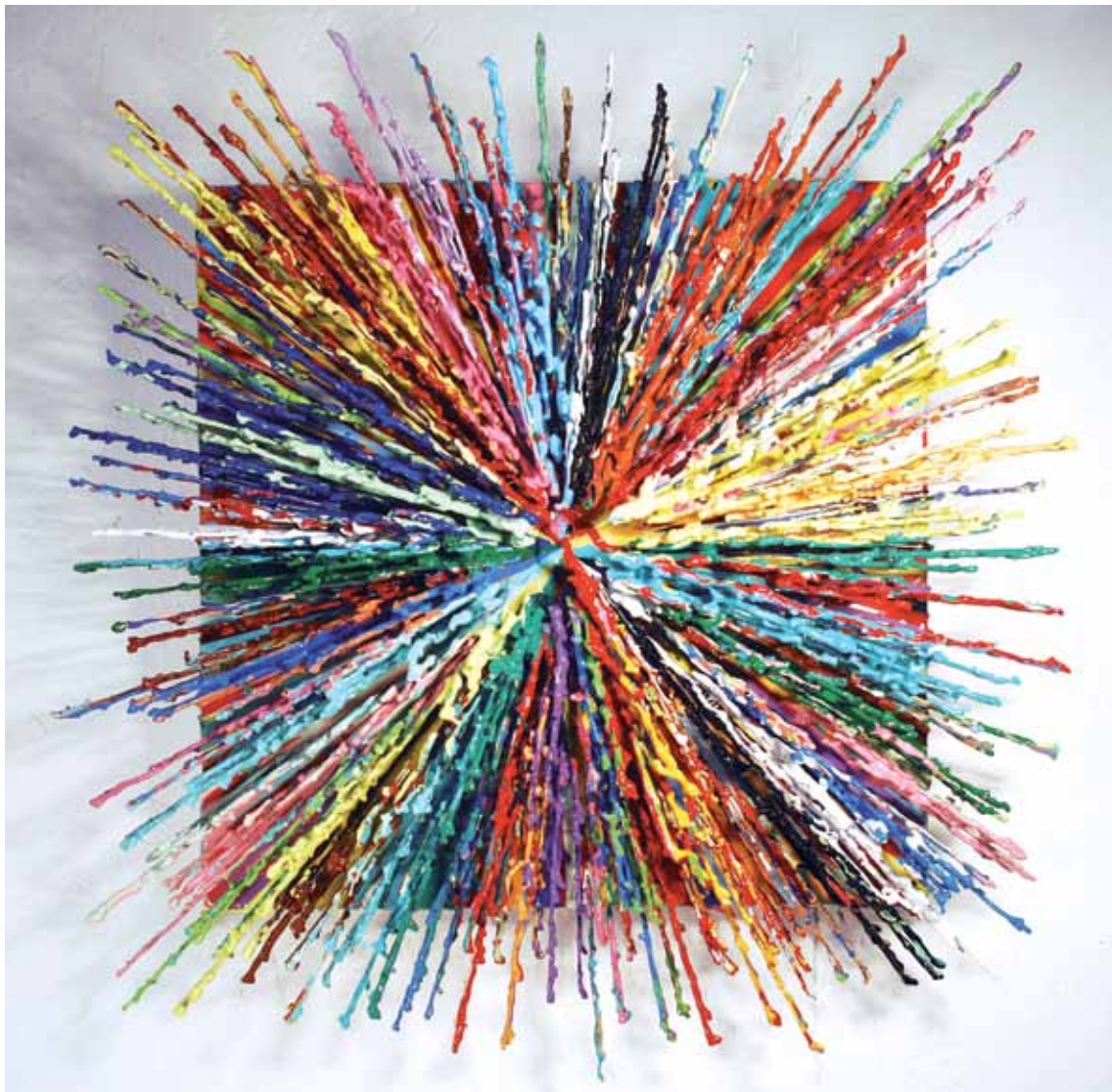




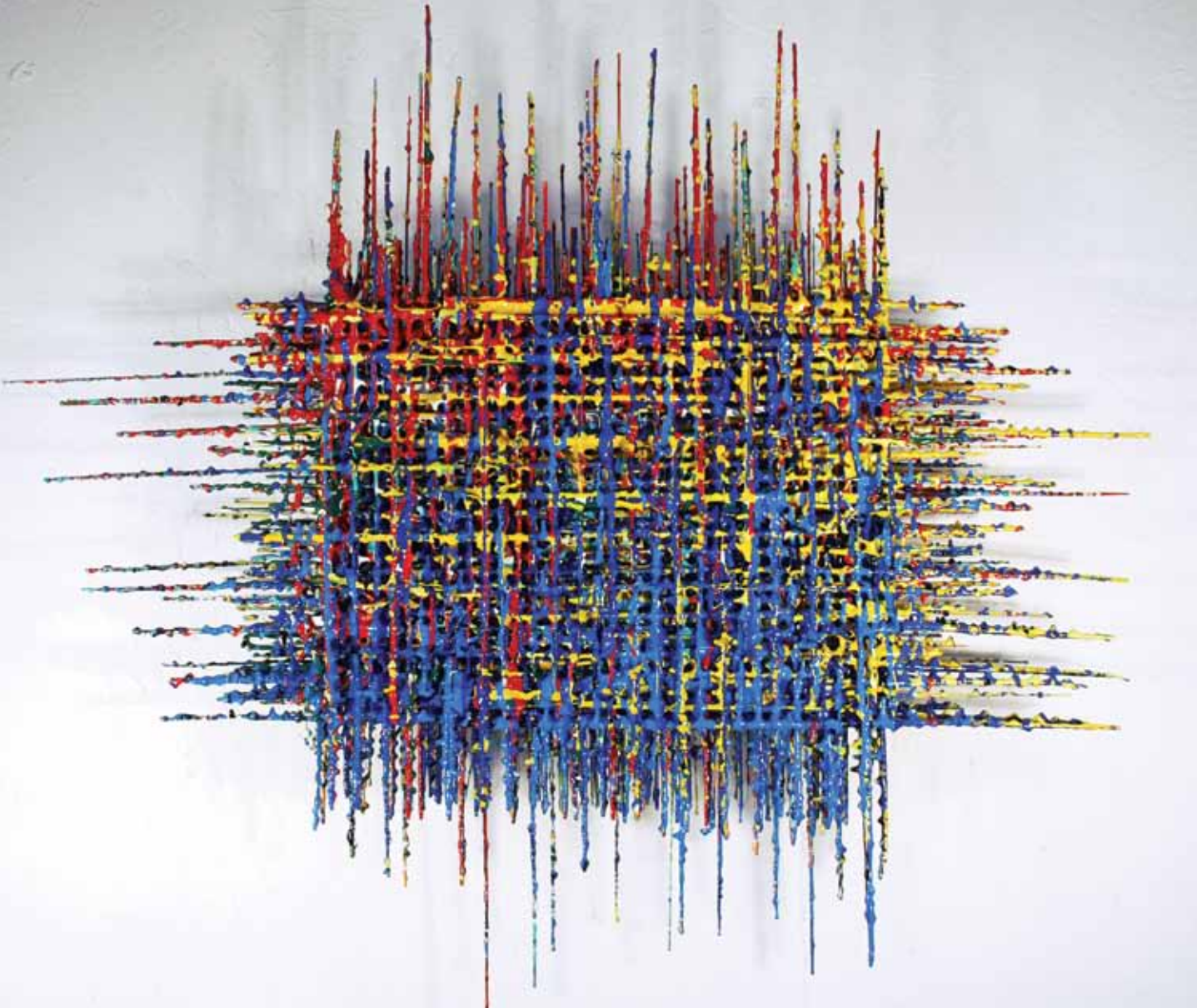
Russell West
'Slow Big Bang VI'
100 x 100 x 15cm
Oil on wire on board
(Opposite page: Big Bang VII - detail)





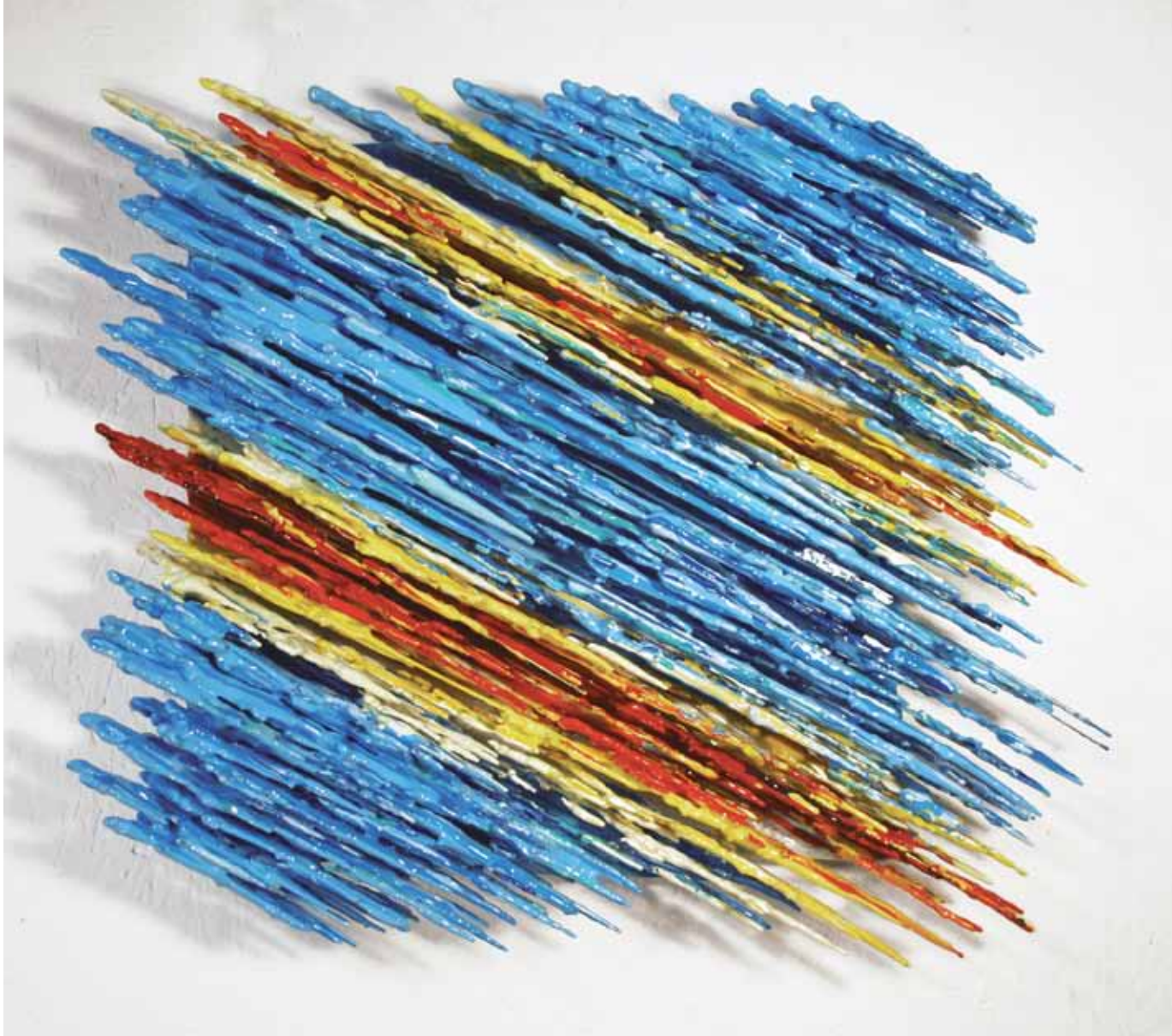


Russell West
'Gnab'
56 x 56 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board
(Opposite page: Detail)



Russell West
'Gridlock'
77 x 67 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board

Russell West
'C'
56 x 48 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board





Russell West
'Fall Out'
61 x 53cm
Oil on board

Russell West
'Fall Out II'
61 x 53cm
Oil on board





Russell West 'Tondo landscape' (with detail)
92 x 173 x 79cm Oil on wire on board, mounted on easel



Russell West 'Self portrait II (size 9)'
50 x 30 x 25cm (approx) Oil on boots



Russell West
'Lingerie' (with detail opposite)
43 x 115 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board





Russell West
'Rebel'
46 x 78cm
Mixed media

Russell West
'Funny as a banana'
73 x 63 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board





Russell West
'Happy Hour'
168 x 120 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board
(This page: detail
Opposite: full artwork)





Russell West
'Favela'
139 x 72 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board
(This page: detail
Opposite: full artwork)





Russell West
'Made in Hong Kong'
107 x 122 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board
(This page: full artwork
Opposite: detail)





Russell West
'Happy Hour II'
160 x 120 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board
(This page: detail
Opposite: full artwork)



Russell West 'The Strip I'
36 x 60 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'The Strip III'
36 x 60 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'Happy Shanty II'
45 x 90 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'Late night lemonade moment V'
43 x 77 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'The ballad of Hon Hom'
49 x 104 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'May'
53 x 99 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'Soho XVI'
45 x 85 x 10cm Oil on wire on board



Russell West 'Soho XVII'
45 x 85 x 10cm Oil on wire on board





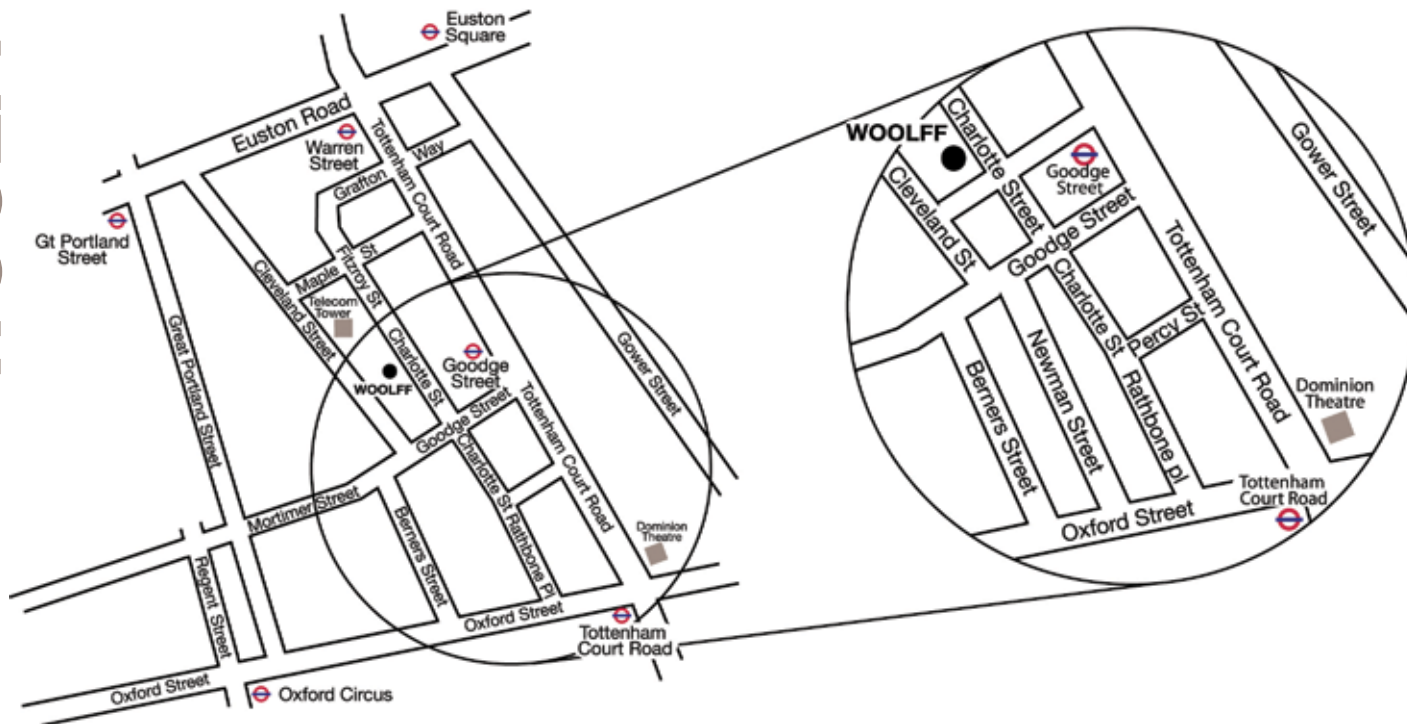
Russell West
'First Light'
76 x 100 x 10cm
Oil on wire on board

Russell West
 'Man Nest'
 74 x 138cm
 Mixed Media



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