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Artists bring personalised attitudes and ambitions to their practices. For Tira Walsh, the painter pushes, deceives, and tries to get the upper hand. There is a rare debate between painter and painting where the artist thrives on the possibility of losing and the pressure and understanding required to win. For Walsh, painting is a “hustle” full of risk and assertiveness. In the studio, the painter creates an imaginary scene and wears a poker face at all times. Walsh pushes persuasions that are pressed back against by the paintings themselves and revels in these lively discussions. The painter’s distinctive demeanour allows for a risk-taking mindset as well as sensitive back and forth negotiations. There is a rich appreciation for city lights, surfaces and the way paint is used in our built environments. Derelict buildings, worn posters and fluorescent lighting become the backdrop for these painted altercations. Walsh sets up the engagement, fully aware and ready with a set of moves from her picture-making logic, language and control.

Hesitant as always to discuss the autobiographical nature of the paintings, Walsh does accept the studio as a comparatively safe and healthy environment to work out problems. Bold abstract painting is not a cosy pursuit, if this is a safe and healthy option, we can appreciate the artist's tough character. In the paintings for this show, *Industry*, turbulent urban life persists to be realised in tricky abstract painting.

Walsh’s studio is located in Parnell next to the railway tracks on the inner edge of downtown Auckland. Before entering the studio, the painter can take in the civic textures, the stark excavation of developing sites and abandoned lots. Upon entering, she is quickly at work, at 9 am you can hear the piercing of staples through the canvas to timber or rattles of the spray can—there is no comfy chair to slack off on. Tools and various paraphernalia are neatly at the painter's disposal, the brush collections, the lacquer, and the tape are ready to respond differently to each critical situation. With headphones on, she manoeuvres paint on artworks that are underway, lying flat on large tables. Around the studio, some are propped up to be ‘seen to’ later. This is a studio practice grounded in focus, intimidating and exemplary for new painters. Studios are a personal and intriguing part of art practices; we don't often get in behind the scenes. For Walsh, hers is a place of authority, the artist is the master ready to extract what she needs from the subjects at hand. This relationship with the work is unfixed, Walsh is simultaneously the top dog, yet the paintings can rebel. The dialogue in the studio enthralls the painter with its unpredictability even in the face of vigilant preparation. The artist delivers herself to the painting, un-vexed by goings-on outside the studio. In this space, she talks to herself, trying to pre-empt the visual stimuli the painting delivers back. The “game” of strategy has no restrictions, the painter tries to be two steps ahead.

Part of the control the painter exerts is having complete awareness of the painting object extending from the front surface. Walsh paints on the back of the canvas, pushing the medium through to the front, and paints on the side edges of the artwork. The deep engagement with contemporary abstract painting can be seen in the “all-over” ideas and ratios of marks. Walsh is fluent in editing and disrupting orientation and reading, a key strategy in the game. The artist states how important it is to bring something that will “butt heads” into the dialogue.

In the act of painting, initial groundwork is made; these are quietly calculated. In the moves that transpire, the transaction escalates in intricacy. Some responses are clearly premeditated while others are responsive. In the paintings for *Industry*, red aerosol jostles neutral grey or a slick translucent shape sits on a grungy plane. Feeding on the adrenaline, she has an approach that not all painters share; her mantra of “overpowering” and “eliminating doubt” guides the process. Walsh is a ‘first hit’ type of painter, so stepping up is crucial. The lack of hesitation in the paintings is what gives her work a fresh buzz. Utilizing everything at her disposal to get a result, Walsh loves how a painting will ultimately give you what *it* wants and lives for these potentially volatile encounters.