

BEN EDMUNDS  
The Future Perfect®

L21 BARCELONA  
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What awaits you at the top of the mountain? What transcendence arrives after the months of training and preparation? What are we climbing towards, and why are we in such a hurry to get there?

*The Future Perfect®* is an exhibition about looking forward. It is about the ambition and perseverance of artists and explorers alike, their determination to overcome obstacles and challenges, and live forever in pursuit of their dreams. To move forwards is to move forwards from somewhere, and this solo exhibition of Ben Edmunds marks a big step forwards in his painting practice.

Overall, Edmunds' work can be characterised by an unusual combination of colour field abstraction and adventure sports equipment. Created by layering thin mists of fabric dye, the colour-rich canvases are stained and relate to modernists such as Jules Olitski, Helen Frankenthaler and Kenneth Noland. But sculptural and in graphic design interventions bring the works firmly into the present moment, the painting is proposed as a sort of tool for an adventure, with its own rules, materiality and branding. We are encouraged to consider how an artwork operates, physically and metaphysically, and where it can take us.

Carbon fibre frames, elastic shock cords and carabiner clips frame the work with surprising coherence, a nod to the outdoor pursuits Edmunds enjoyed as a child and the equipment that was core to these sports, or to a present day obsession with utility and engineering that can be found in fashion on the streets of London. Wherever it comes from, this obsession with 'kit' points to a lust for adventure and a thirst for experience, and Edmunds' work recognises that as a people, we are thirsty. We are perpetually unsatisfied and searching. We want to escape the city, we want to escape our phones and we want to find something else. This unending search is also the job of the abstract painter, every day looking for new forms within the canvas.

A new series, titled *It's time to believe in magic*, is presented in this exhibition alongside the colourful gradient paintings Edmunds has become known for. The magic paintings are hard-edged and minimal, similar to the colour experiments of Ellsworth Kelly. Created with mostly flat blocks of uninterrupted hand-dyed colour, multiple canvases are held together by heavy sculptural frames and elastic cords. Edmunds states: "I am looking forward to showing these, because I don't fully understand them. They are exciting and unfamiliar to me, but I believe in them. They resemble nautical flags, designed for communication, but their messages are unclear."

It is in this spirit of innovation and risk that we find Edmunds' work. Short incidents of text such as "Dreams are for dreamers" and "The best is yet to come" can be found on the frames of the artworks - such titles conjuring images of a leap of faith and a romantic nod to pursuits of the artist exploring unknown territories.