



# OBSSESSED WITH

# BLUE

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He is chic, slim and barefoot in light blue suede slippers with a perfectly fitting suit – of course in blue, his “signature”. To be McCreedyblue™, it would have to be a bit lighter: The characteristic, luminous cobalt blue, which the 32-year-old South African developed and produced, is so present in his headquarters at Zurich’s Schipfe that the artist knows exactly how to intensify its effect with a somewhat deeper blue nuance.

Anyway, with Conor McCreedy one has the feeling that nothing is left to chance. As free, fluid and energetic as his artistic style is – with large, abstract and confident blue “swooshes” – so his business sense is just as good, with strictly limited collaborations with luxury brands that help him carry his colour worlds out into the world. His sheer enthusiasm for painting does the rest.

In conversation, Conor, the private person and art connoisseur, appears relaxed and in a good mood. When he talks about his art, he sits upright, speaks faster, and his gaze – already intense with his piercing blue eyes – intensifies. Suddenly you no longer see the well-dressed dandy, but the artist who has to release this energy while painting, and suddenly you feel the need to get yourself to safety. >

**THE  
MOMENT  
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Born into a well-known, long-established South African family, Conor was, by his own account, an “extremely undisciplined” child. “I was a disruptive student. Still today I hold the record for being given the most reprimands in my boarding school, and I even collected lashes before they were banned.”

He was a highly gifted troublemaker, who always wanted to prove himself. Already at the age of 18 he had “mastered all colours” and needed a new challenge when painting, which he found in a single nuance of blue. “I have spent the last decade – even a little more – painting only with this colour. Yes, it can be frustrating. But it’s also a great challenge. And I love challenges!” Conor McCreedy is the kind of man who rises to the challenge.

His story, which led him from an aborted art course at the Pratt Institute in New York to London and (again and again) South Africa, is currently being told in Zurich. For about two years now, the artist has been at Schipfe, directly on the Limmat. Here, in a discreetly pompous mansion, are the “McCreedy Headquarters”, which stretch over three floors and two buildings. On the ground floor there is a showroom and studio where his drawings are created, on the first floor there is painting, right next door Conor throws dinner parties for his collectors and patrons in the “Dining Room” and then finds in his eclectically furnished library the peace and quiet that he urgently needs over and over again. Here, amid hundreds of books, illustrated books and artefacts from his travels, he seems to have found an almost perfect mix of routine, discipline and nature.

“I love being the host and when people have a good time with me,” he says. “I’ve worked hard to make it this far, and sometimes you just have to let go and throw a party.” Although McCreedy stresses that he was much wilder at a young age, he still seems pretty restless for 32. A balance to his self-imposed blue celibacy while painting? Well possibly, he says. “I never get out of control when celebrating; everything in moderation. But unfortunately I’m also a complete hypocrite and constantly contradict myself, because I’m obsessed with one colour, and there’s no balance for me, it’s a damn obsession.”

And despite the fact that McCreedy is one of the very few artists whose style is bound to one colour, he is already drawn to the next challenge: he wants to be disciplined by a new colour. >



He has been experimenting with a “McCreedyred” for over a year now, and his best buyers already own some of these works –of which not a single online picture is yet available.

“Red is a completely new league, and I’m not sure if my energy reserves are sufficient. Blue is my baby, my child ... I’ve spent more than ten years raising it. When I use red it exhausts me completely, it is a completely different energy. While blue is balanced, fresh and cool, red has something crazy, captive and is extremely sensual. I would like to explore this new, warmer side within me. My whole life could change with it. Maybe then I will become more relaxed, more passionate ... not quite as structured and uptight as with blue. Look, I’m already starting to sweat!”

The conversation remains animated as he talks about his upcoming projects. One of them is based on a wild idea to which he received the answer “Conor, it simply can’t be done! His reaction? In November, he will unveil a gigantic stone sculpture at a ceremony for thirty of his most loyal collectors and patrons in his homeland of South Africa, the so-called “cradle of mankind”. He is currently having it erected by a team of five engineers, geologists and paleontologists and will then paint it with McCreedyblue™.

Also in planning? A museum of his own in which he will present his own steadily growing collection of contemporary art in addition to his own works, as well as an illustrated book with his works. “I told you: I love challenges!” —

**ITOLD  
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ILOVE  
CHALLENGES!**

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