

Joshua Hagler

Joshua Hagler is an artist and writer living in rural New Mexico with his wife Maja Ruznic. As a recipient of a 2018 RAIr Grant and Residency, Hagler was given a full year and stipend to live and work at the residence. Since then, the pair have made their home in New Mexico and are now expecting their first child in July.

What was your latest book discovery? What are your favorite books of all time?

[Night Sky with Exit Wounds](#), a collection of poems by Ocean Vuong. Ocean Vuong is the future. It's been quickly decided.

Favorite books are too numerous to list. I'm a completist, so, for me, it's more about the writer. [Flannery O'Connor](#) was the first author whose library I exhausted and is, to this day, among my top ten. I re-read [Wise Blood](#) recently and understood it for the first time. I am also reading parenting books.

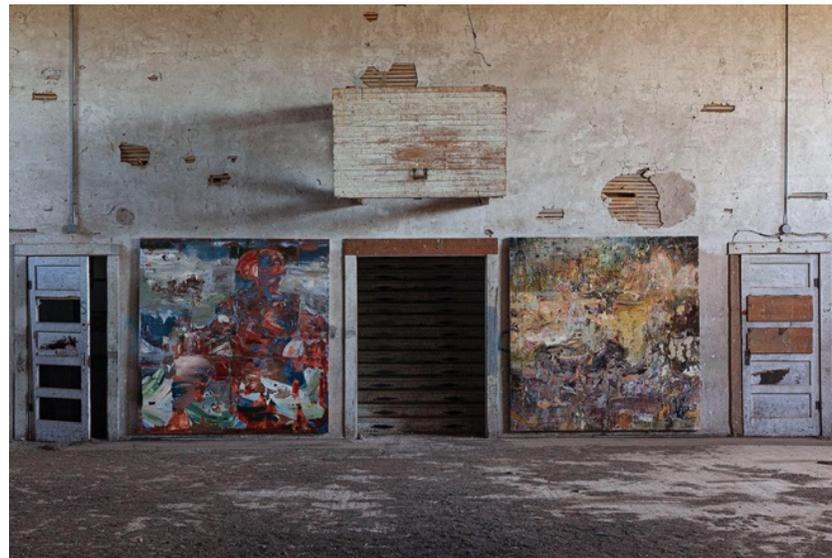
Most visited blogs, websites?

I like lectures, readings, and podcasts. I'm obsessed with the podcast [OnBeing](#).

[Throughline](#) is one I was obsessed with as soon as it came out, and the question is causing me to look into it again now. I bet they're doing some great stuff at the moment. I sometimes go through NPR's [City Arts and Lectures](#) archive.

As I mentioned, I get obsessed, so lately I've been letting all of [Ocean Vuong's](#) readings and interviews run through on YouTube while I work in the studio. I was doing that with [Marilynne Robinson](#) before that. I like to listen to [Yusef Komunyakaa](#) read while I work as well.

I also like the hobby some people seem to have where they mess with videos and lectures and post those on YouTube. Like when someone sets an [Alan Watts](#) lecture to ambient music. That really does something for me. YouTube just queues it up! I also like university lectures. I took an entire Yale course on Dante a number of years ago. For free!



Most recent Google searches?

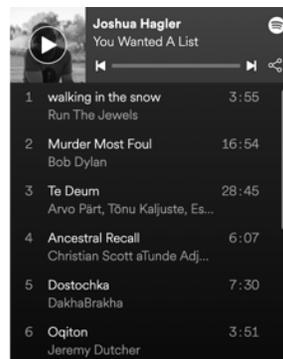
All of the names I just mentioned so that I could make sure I spelled them right. Before that was your site.

What apps do you use the most and why?

[Instagram](#), [iTunes](#), and my email, probably in that order. Then the weather and the calculator. I don't really download apps and I hate when someone makes me.

I use [WhatsApp](#) to communicate with my gallery and certain friends abroad, but that's the only one I'm not angry about taking up space on my phone.

What's currently on your playlist?



What records would you recommend others listen to?

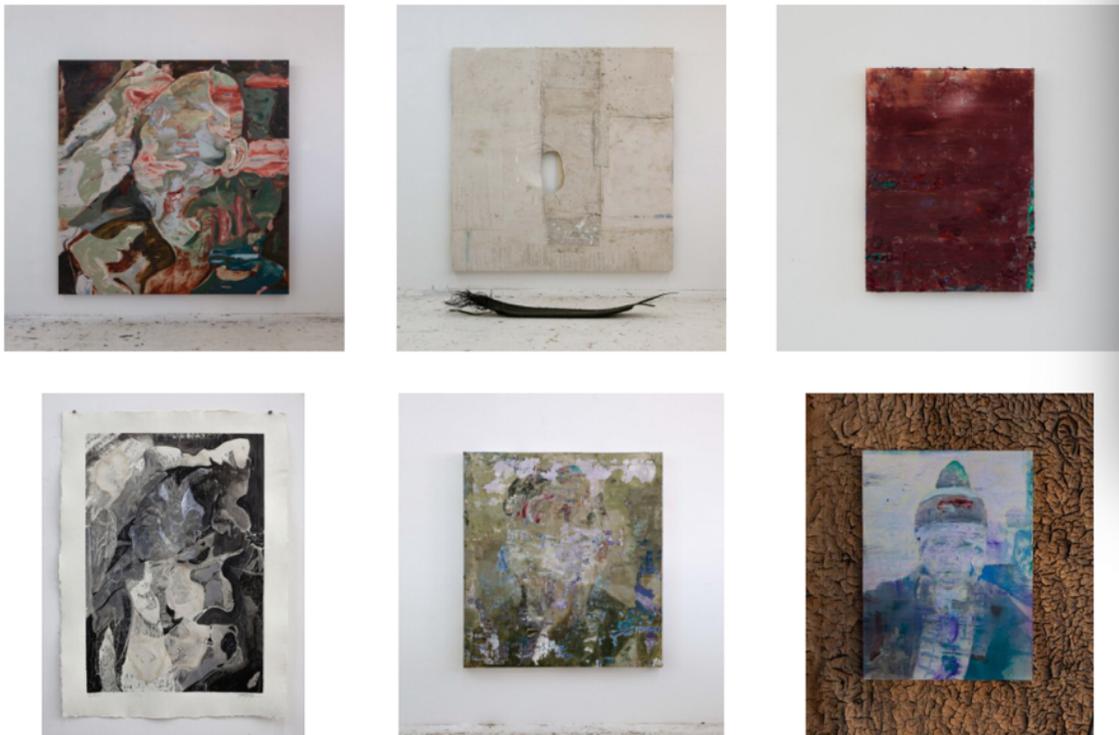
Well, first of all, I'd recommend listening to records! I'm taking your question literally bc I've gotten into collecting vinyl in recent years. I like to buy them in small-town antique shops and pretentious big city record shops alike. I listen to different music on my turntable in my house than on my computer in my studio. Nothing current is in my collection. Can I recommend a day?...

Begin your morning with [Van Morrison](#). It doesn't really matter which record, but I found [Beautiful Vision](#) in an antique shop recently and that one will do.

When I come in for lunch, I might put on some gorgeous country gal like [Emmylou Harris](#). [Pieces of the Sky](#) is my favorite lately.

When it's my night to cook dinner, I like women with beautiful voices or big band. That could mean [Edith Piaf](#), [Nina Simone](#), [Count Basie](#) or [Tommy Dorsey](#), for example. Last night it was Count Basie. [Sixteen Men Swinging](#).

I'm digressing for a sec because, just before, it was Nina Simone. I bring her up because the record of hers I've been listening to has one of my very favorite songs, which I didn't include in the playlist question bc I never listen to it on digital. It's [Pirate Jenny](#). Now if you know your music history, you know that song predates her; it was written by Bertolt Brecht and performed in Kurt Weill's [Three Penny Opera](#). I saw a production years ago and it was good, but if you listen to Nina Simone sing it NOW? you hear something else altogether. It's as current as a song could be. Even to play it in my head I get goosebumps. I imagine there are many recordings of it by her, but the one I listen to is on a 2016 rerelease from 1964 called, simply, [Nina Simone in Concert](#). I'm not sure how it might have originally been recorded and released.



Fresh movie finds? What films do you think everybody should watch?

I'm a film enthusiast so it gets hard to narrow things down...everyone? Hm. Well, I tend to think my favorite films aren't for everyone. I saw [The Lighthouse](#) recently and it literally felt like someone made a movie just for me. I felt like I received a gift. Everything about that film was for me.

As with writers, I'm a completist with directors. I think the two most exciting directors to come around in recent years have been [Yorgos Lanthimos](#) and [Barry Jenkins](#). For Lanthimos I'd recommend [The Lobster](#), and for Jenkins, [Moonlight](#).

Also, not new, but a recent obsession for me is [Lynne Ramsay](#). [You Were Never Really Here](#) is her most recent I think, starring Joaquin Phoenix, who is always incredible.

Oh, one more director I've been revisiting is [Roy Andersson](#), a Swiss filmmaker. The first of his that I saw, [Songs from the Second Floor](#) might still be my favorite. Swiss film is good. [Border](#) by Ali Abassi is incredible. It should go without saying that [David Lynch](#) is among my heroes. [Inland Empire](#) is a lot better than you thought it was the first time you saw it.

Which artists working today do you admire most?

Hmmmm...I struggle with this. I think it's psychological for me. I have the hardest time coming into the present with visual art. I prefer the dead ones generally. I suspect that might change now though. The atmosphere is right for work that matters. Well, first, the contemporary painter I love the most is my wife [Maja Ruznic](#). No one will trust me saying this, being her husband, but I don't care. I'm not bullshitting. She's the best painter under 40 there is. Beyond that, I can only tell you who's been on my mind lately:

[Mark Bradford](#) is a big one for me. It's his work that influenced me to find ways of digging back into the surface to bring out earlier layers.

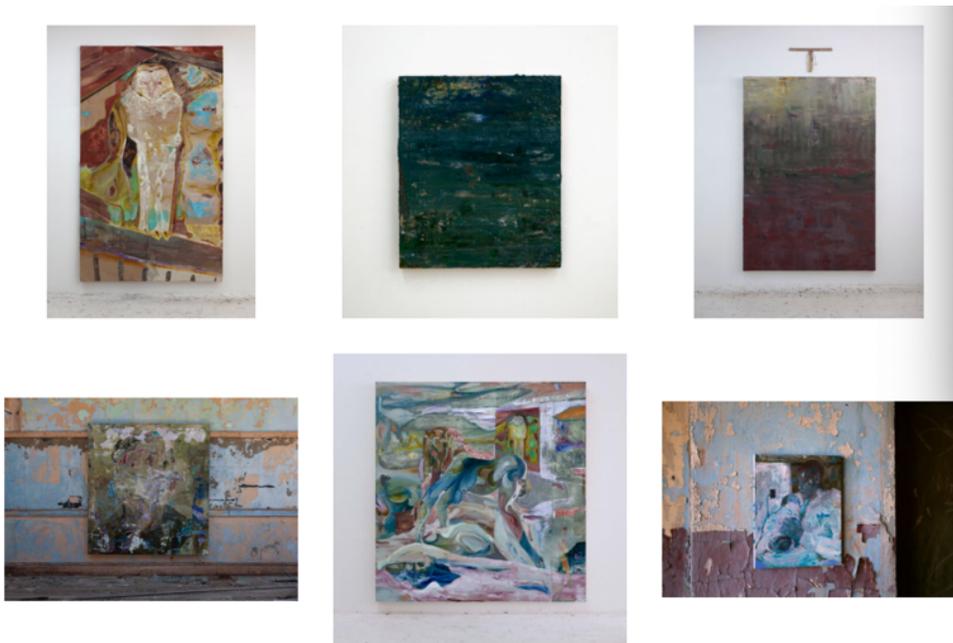
Another Mark, [Mark Manders](#), who's Dutch, is someone who got me thinking about how an artist creates a world from an inner logic all one's own.

[Trenton Doyle Hancock](#) is another one like that, although totally opposite from Manders in tone. People might think it's weird I just compared those two but it makes sense to me. They're both working on a lifelong architecture of self-portraiture as far as I might describe it.

[Kiki Smith](#), now that I'm thinking of it, is another like that. In fact, it was her exhibition at SFMOMA years ago that really transported me somewhere else altogether. That ranked high in terms of all the shows I've seen over the years, and the power of an exhibition to shift consciousness.

I'm trying to think of someone young and underappreciated to add here. I've been enjoying painters such as [Soumya Netrabile](#), [Sky Glabush](#), and [Jakob Steen](#).

I might bring up my community here at [RAiR](#) in New Mexico. This is one of the coolest programs in the country and so many people don't know about it. I'm surrounded by incredible artists, some current residents in the program, some permanent neighbors. This is a link to the site <https://rair.org/>.



What are some of your tv top tips right now?

[What We Do in the Shadows](#), [Devs](#), [Fleabag](#) (I miss that show so much), and the [Watchmen](#) HBO show turned out to be remarkable.

Who are you following?

More than I know. But I limit my time. Those artists I listed above are easy to find on Instagram. Same with all the podcasts and so on.

What tools do you use in your work?

Brushes, knives, squeegees, all the Adobe software, pencils, pens, ink, burlap, canvas, polyester film, wood, bones, rawhide, stuff I find in the desert

What magazines / newspapers do you read regularly?

Oh, this brings up an app I forgot I use. It's just the news app that comes with an iPhone. But I've curated it so I get notifications from everything from [NY Times](#), [LA Times](#) to [Newsweek](#) to [Vice](#) to art magazines, magazines like [Atlantic](#), and physics journals like [phys.org](#). I've curated it over time. I don't really read any physical periodical regularly.

What are your favorite gadgets?

All of our gadgets now are baby things now. I just installed the car seat in the back seat today so it's ready for the big day. Every day there's a new delivery. I don't know where to start. Baby things.

Best online buys lately?

The best online buy I made recently was artwork by longtime friend and fellow artist [Mary Anne Kluth](#) via an Instagram auction. She donated all funds to the [Bail Project](#). Many of us have been doing this as a way to participate as meaningfully as we can in the Black Lives Matter movement and protests.