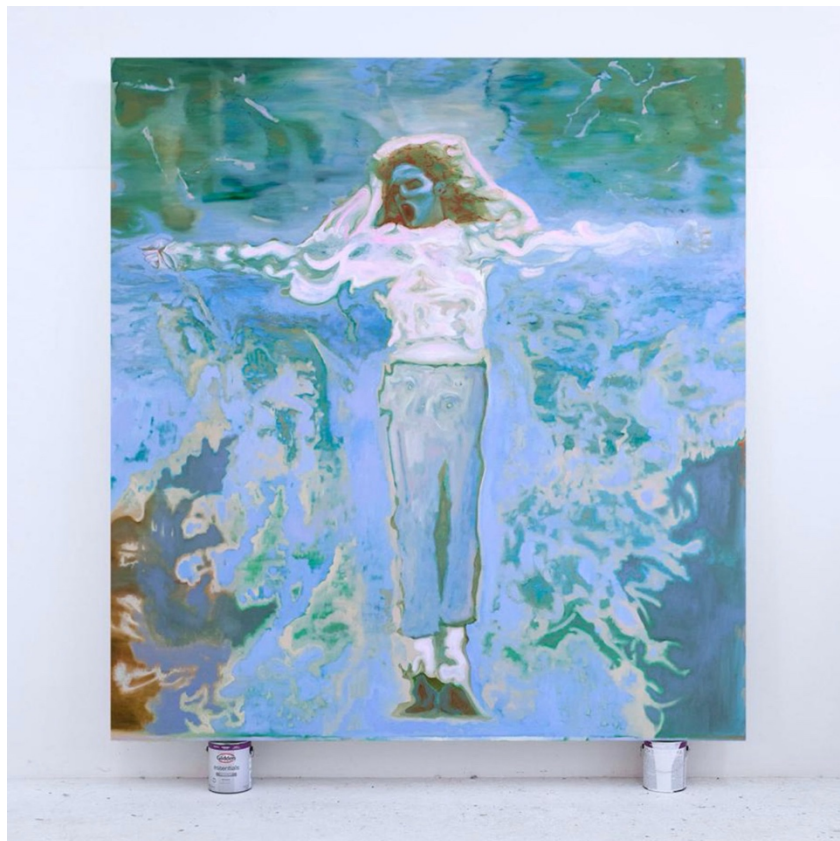


Meet visual artist Joshua Hagler, the hero hunter and green chilli lover.

Joshua Hagler is most well known for his psychologically charged paintings, which portray the violence inside the human mind. *Chimera* is his next exhibition, at [Unit London](#), and presents a new body of work. The exhibition will include huge oil paintings depicting human figures in chaotic arrangements and various distressed moods. The work questions themes of good vs evil and religion vs politics and encourages the viewers to search their inner self for the meaning behind powerful psychological aspects of life. Read on to find out more about Hagler, including his favourite gallery and most interestingly, what he puts in his sandwiches...





1. Where were you born?

Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho.

2. What did you want to be when you were growing up?

An archaeologist or a comic book artist.

3. What is the best piece of advice you have ever received? What is the worst?

My fiancée, Maja Ruznic, is an artist too. I was getting frustrated that my work wasn't generating the kinds of conversations I had hoped it might. Questions and comments seemed to fixate on style - mainly its realism and detail - and not on deeper feelings or ideas. Maja said that if realism is getting in the way, take it out. So I did and a whole world opened up.

A former art dealer suggested on two occasions that I "dumb it down" if I want to sell work. She was probably right. That's what made it particularly bad advice. I don't know where I first heard it, but I don't think I'm the first to point out that a life in art is only sometimes also a career. If you commit to the career but not to the art, you're in trouble and, probably, so is the culture.

4. Who is the one person, dead or alive, that you would like to have dinner with and why?

If I could snap my fingers and make my cat Judith speak English, I'd like to have dinner with her. I imagine she's had some crazy experiences having been feral for the first four years of her life. I even suspect she's lived several lives before this one. So you see, in this way, I get to have several dinner guests for the price of one. As many as nine, I'm thinking.



5. Where is your favourite place on this planet?

I've been lucky to do a good bit of traveling throughout the world and I have terrible nostalgia for so many places I've lived and visited. I only have to go once to miss it forever. Once, I snuck into an abandoned locomotive assembly plant in Ferguson, Missouri, about a year after Michael Brown was murdered by police. It was like a natural wonder. It was winter and a large pond-sized pool at the bottom was frozen. It was dark except for small points of daylight coming through hundreds of bullet holes in a giant corrugated aluminium wall. The light reflected in the frozen pool. It was like a night sky. I climbed to the roof and could see across to the Illinois side of the river. All of this now-forgotten industry, which linked the eastern US to the western frontier had been built over the top of 1,400-year-old earth mounds left by the Cahokia people and those mounds are still preserved on the Illinois side. I stood in a place where the world has ended several times already. I like places where time is most present.

6. What is your phone screensaver at the moment?

I'm not much of a phone person. It's the beach photo it came with.

7. What is currently on your playlist?

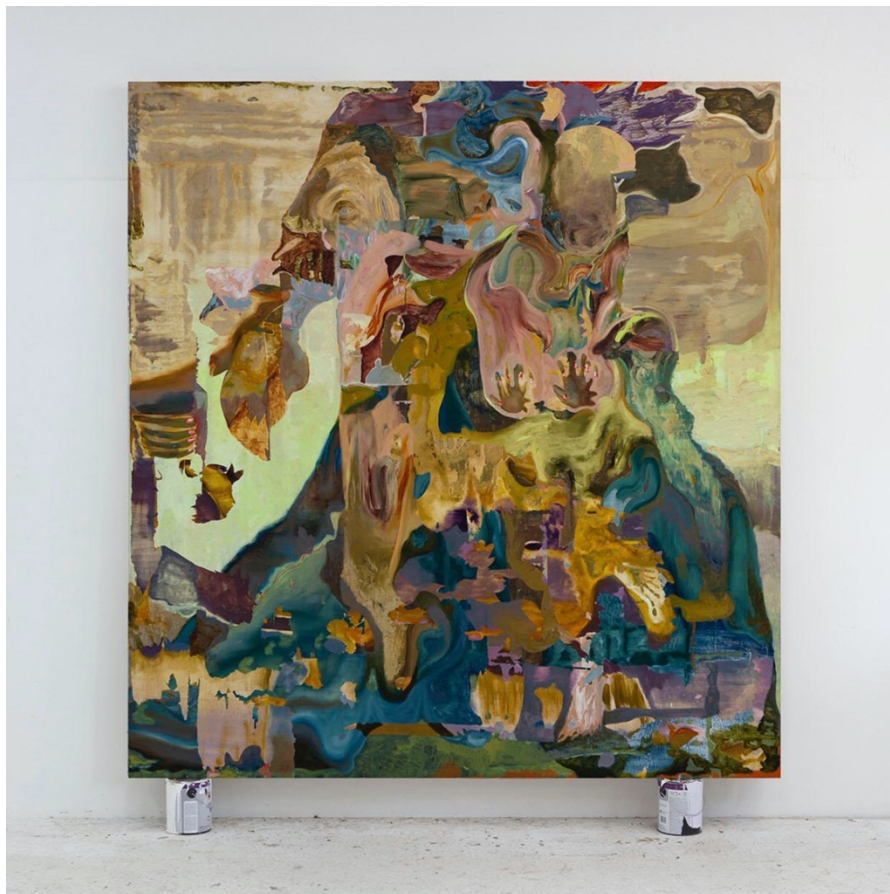
My music habits are broad and constantly evolving. If my list is too long, nothing will stand out. So here I think I'll emphasise my favourite recent discovery, the First Nations composer and vocalist Jeremy Dutcher. Starting with old recordings of his Wolastoq ancestors, he preserves their voices and language in his own work while creating new compositions that grow out from the source material. To listen to it is to be transported somewhere profoundly necessary.

8. What are your last three Google searches?

New York Times “The Daily” podcast; California earthquake; and map searches of various towns in northern New Mexico.

9. What gives you inspiration?

Well, things I’ve mentioned above, certain places, music all inspire me as a person. But as an artist I don’t really know how to make use of that inspiration, at least not consciously. The poet Lucie Brock-Broido, who died last year, said of her own work that it is “troubled into its making”. That spoke to me. I guess you could say that what sets me ill at ease is what I feel the greatest need to understand. How I try to understand anything is through the making of the work.





10. We all love a movie night, so what is your favourite film of all time?

It's a tie between [2001: A Space Odyssey](#) and *Dead Man*.

11. What is your favourite art gallery in the world and why?

Well, I like a number of art galleries, but it's still the museums I need most and there are so many I like. Two permanent collections I could see over and over again and never get bored of are the Oceanic collection at the De Young Museum in San Francisco and the German Expressionist collection at the Pinakothek Der Moderne in Munich.

12. If you could collaborate with anyone, who would it be and why?

Cormac McCarthy. He's my favourite living novelist and I would like to collaborate with a writer. I would like to be posed with a challenge thought up by him and for my work to accompany something he's working on. I suspect I would learn a lot and that it would change my work in a lasting way.

13. What is your favourite sandwich filling?

Green chili jelly.

14. If you could visit any artist's studio, whose would you visit and why?

Anselm Kiefer. It's not a studio. It's a temple and a laboratory. It's a cave and a particle accelerator. It's a cemetery and the Tower Of Babel. I highly recommend looking it up if I sound nuts. I need to see for myself the life I wanted.



15. What was the last thing you bought?

Two \$1.99 episodes of *Seinfeld* on Amazon Prime. The “Yadda Yadda” episode and “The Abstinence”.

16. What is your favourite piece of clothing?

I just bought the three best things I own. Here they are: An *Eraserhead* T-shirt with an image of the weird puffy-cheek lady, a James Ensor T-shirt with skeletons and a pair of maroon boots!

17. What is hanging on your walls at home?

Our friends’ art and a few of ours too.

18. What is one staple item all men should own?

[Art](#). You don’t need to be rich either. The difference in price range is often much greater than the difference in quality. You can pay a lot for crap. I would try to avoid that. I would try to make a difference in the life of an undervalued artist, young or old, perhaps especially the old, and see what they might be willing to part with if you help with some of the studio rent. If you don’t know any artists, contact me, and I’ll make some recommendations.

19. What is your favourite cartoon and why?

Everything by Miyazaki. Perhaps *Spirited Away* is my favourite. It’s in the connection to mythology and nature. I feel like a better person watching them.

20. So, what is next for Joshua Hagler?

After my solo show, *Chimera*, at Unit London, I'll finish up work for a two-person show with Maja at Big Pictures LA in September, then I'll be off to an art residency in October with the brand new Project 1606 in Leiden, Netherlands.



All images courtesy of Joshua Hagler and Unit London.

- Poppy Malby