

# Gasland

When filmmaker Josh Fox received an unexpected offer of \$100,000 for the natural gas drilling rights to his property in the Delaware River Basin on the border of New York and Pennsylvania, he set off on a cross-country journey to investigate the environmental risks of agreeing to the deal.

The resulting film is *Gasland*, a visionary and sometimes darkly comic look at the largest domestic natural gas drilling campaign in history. As Fox discovers, the drilling process, called hydraulic fracturing or fracking, was exempted by the Bush Cheney Energy Policy Act of 2005 from the United States' most basic environmental regulations, including the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Air Act.

Part verité road trip, part expose, mystery and showdown, *Gasland* follows director Fox on a 24-state investigation of the devastating, toxic effects of hydraulic fracturing.

**Production Budget**  
\$32,078

PUMACreative  
Impact Award

BRITDOC



## WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

### Variety

"One of the most effective and expressive environmental films of recent years."

### Village Voice

"With its jolting images of flammable tap water and chemically burned pets, New York theater-director-turned-documentarian Josh Fox's Sundance-feted shocker makes an irrefutable case against U.S. corporate "fracking."

### Daily Express

"An absorbing, level-headed documentary exposing the way in which nothing is allowed to stand in the path of corporate greed."

### ABC Radio International

"An explosive and timely film."

**IMDB** 78%

From 4,082 users

**Rotten Tomatoes** 97%

Average 6.9/10

# The Film

## WHO SAW IT?

### Estimated global audience

Approximate viewing figures from countries outside the US are not currently available.

On HBO in the US and in Latin America, the film has been seen by over **1,000,000** people

### Cinema

Released in **15** countries including US, Canada, Scandinavia & Singapore

### Broadcast

Shown in **22** countries

HBO has commissioned a follow-up film from the director focusing on the industry reaction to the film

### Festivals

**14** including Sundance, Hot Docs & Silverdocs

### Online trailer views

YouTube **1,900,761** views

### Facebook

**73,694** likes  
Approximately **3.2 Million** views of postings

### Twitter

**7,423** followers

### Website

**1.4 million** page views

## AWARDS & PRIZES

**Academy Award 2011** - Nominated for Best Documentary

**Emmy** - Best Documentary Directing - Nominated for Writer and Camera

**Writer's Guild of America** - Nominated for Best Documentary Screenplay

**Sundance Film Festival 2010** - Special Jury Prize

**Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2010** - Artistic Vision Award

**Environmental Media Awards 2010** - EMA Award

**International Documentary Association 2010** - Nominated Pare Lorentz Award

**Sarasota Film Festival 2010** - Special Jury Prize

Listed in Current TV **50 Best Documentaries** of all time

Plus a further **6 awards** and numerous other citations

# **THE CAMPAIGN**

The goal of *Gasland's* engagement campaign was to place the film as a focal point in gaining support for the worldwide fight against fracking.

The director Josh Fox continued to personally identify himself with the fracking issue throughout the campaign attending hundreds of screenings in fracking-affected communities, and worked with grassroots activists in those locations to grow a movement that sought to change the conversation around this controversial new technology.

## **CAMPAIGN AIMS**

- Put fracking as an issue on the map
- Enable viewers to connect with activist/grassroots organisations via social media
- Lobby elected officials and institutions at the highest levels in order to curtail fracking

## **HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKED**

The team's strategy was to tour the film widely, with the director in attendance conducting Q&A's, in order to reach the widest possible public audience in the affected areas. In this way the campaign built up the director as an anti-fracking spokesman and recognized media figure.

The campaign also sought to create an ADDY Award-winning website and a presence on Facebook and Twitter which would allow viewers to connect with grassroots organisations in their area as well as write directly to Congress in support of federal legislation that seeks to curtail fracking.

### **Extensive screening programme**

Josh Fox personally toured approximately 180 cities and towns in the US, toured Australia extensively for three weeks, premiered the film in the UK, France, Holland, Sweden, Spain, Poland and numerous other European countries in theaters and on television. He also conducted hundreds of Q&A sessions and speeches after screenings of the film in coordination with local grassroots and national environmental organisations as well as at many colleges and universities. Each of these screenings and appearances was intended to embolden locals to take the fight into their own hands.

Fox has done over 50 major media appearances including The Daily Show with John Stewart, MSNBC's Countdown with Keith Olbermann, and Amy Goodman's Democracy Now.

### **Key influencers**

The team also organised screenings of the film to high profile personalities in order to raise funds, engage influential people who could be adversely impacted by fracking and raise the public's awareness of the issue.

Actor Mark Ruffalo hosted a "celebrity screening" attended by Ethan Hawke, Susan Sarandon and Debra Winger, among others.

### **Political & Corporate Lobbying**

The film was screened for the regional and federal Environmental Protection Agency numerous times, the US Congress, the Pennsylvania, New York, Colorado and Texas legislatures and the campaign has developed relationships with key political figures who have championed anti-fracking initiatives.

## CAMPAIGN IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

### Creating a movement

Through extensive touring the film has been seen by over 200,000 people at numerous screening events in the US and the *Gasland* website garnered over 75,000 signatories and 100,000 signatures on petitions and letters for local organisations directed at politicians and other leaders nationwide, showing how audiences moved beyond passive viewing to taking action.

Josh Fox reached out to Michelle Williams, who has become a vocal and outspoken critic of fracking and has recorded a PSA directed by Josh Fox.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2012/07/michelle-williams-voices-anti-hydrofracking-ad>

The film has been seen and commented on in social media and other media outlets by Danny Devito, Sophia Bush, Alyssa Milano, Yoko and Sean Ono Lennon, Rainn Wilson, Stephen Colbert, Albert Maysles and many others.

This movement has grown by leaps and bounds over the past two years, leading to the creation of hundreds of local organisations. Now, these various grassroots anti-fracking groups are coming together to create a network that is capable of coordinating a cohesive movement. All of the outreach campaign's achievements - the legislative victories in NY and Pennsylvania, the media attention, the support of government officials - would not be possible without rise of a truly populist pro-sustainability movement that arose because of *Gasland*.

### Corporate Marketing

"*Gasland really changed everything,*" says Paul Kelly, communications adviser to Cuadrilla, the first company to explore fracking techniques in the UK. "*Before that, shale gas was not seen as routinely controversial.*"

It is a measure of *Gasland's* message penetration that it found itself on the receiving end of a multimillion dollar PR and propaganda effort by the natural gas industry to try and discredit the film, writing letters to the Academy of Arts and Sciences formally protesting *Gasland's* Oscar nomination and purchasing ads on Google so anyone who searches for the film first sees a document called "Debunking *Gasland*," from Energy in Depth, a propaganda arm of the industry.

<http://www.energyindepth.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Debunking-Gasland.pdf>



### At the heart of government

Due to the publicity surrounding the film and the director's personal identification with the issue, Josh Fox has been invited to work within government to effect political change; he is currently serving as a consultant to the Environmental Protection Agency, advising a national study on the effects of hydraulic fracturing and potential criminal enforcement. He is also consultant for the US Department of Justice and the ongoing investigation into fracking by Representatives Waxman and Markey.

### Legislative changes

Due in part to the massive movement that grew around the film, hydrofracking bans were enacted in Pittsburgh, PA; Tompkins County, NY; Cooperstown, NY; Licking Township, PA; Baldwin, PA; France, Quebec and extended hydrofracking moratoriums were placed in NY State and South Africa.

As Maurice D. Hinchey, US Representative (NY-22) recently said, "*Thanks to Gasland and the millions of grassroots activists across the country, we finally have a counterweight to the influence of the oil and gas industry in our nation's capital...*"





## CAMPAIGN NUTS AND BOLTS

**Campaign budget** \$204,000

**Length of Campaign**  
Summer 2010 – present (ongoing)

### **Campaign Partners**

*Gasland* worked with more than 50 local, state, and national environmental groups. *Gasland* operated in concert with these organisations to effect message saturation in the most affected and increasingly vulnerable communities. In addition, these organisations presented screenings and/or maintained a presence at screenings of *Gasland* where information was provided and the means for further activism on the part of audience members.

*Gasland's* most prominent partners were The Sierra Group, The Natural Resource Defense Council and HYH20.

# Conclusion

Before *Gasland* arrived, fracking was a non-issue, but this campaign has moved this controversial drilling technique from the fringes to the mainstream. Due to mass media coverage and the legwork of the film's director, every community in the US affected by fracking now has the means to lobby for moratoriums, and a huge number have used the film as a tool to do so, creating a popular movement for change in concert with grassroots organisations.

**“this campaign has moved fracking from the fringes to the mainstream”**

It is a measure of *Gasland*'s impact that not only has the oil exploration lobby been forced to launch its own PR offensive in response to the film (now the subject of an HBO follow up by Josh Fox) but that the director has also been invited into the heart of government to advise on the issue.



## **DIRECTOR OF GASLAND, JOSH FOX**

Josh Fox grew up in Milanville, PA and New York City and his work is known for its mix of gripping narrative, heightened imagery and its commitment to socially conscious themes and subjects.

He is the founder and Artistic Director of International WOW Company, a film and theater company that works closely with actors and non actors from diverse cultural backgrounds, including members of the US Military, activist communities in sustainable energy and design, and actors, dancers, designers and filmmakers from around the world to create new work that addresses current national and global social and political crises.

# Press Cuttings

These films attracted huge press attention. Below is a small selection of press cuttings. You can read the full articles by following the links on the page below.

**New York Times, June 9 2010**

<http://nyti.ms/SqNfYB>

**The entire Drilling Down reportage series was started in the New York Times after Gasland premiered on HBO**

<http://nyti.ms/jQ9BF9>

**The Guardian, April 20 2011**

<http://bit.ly/ely0FF>

**The Nation, June 17 2010**

<http://bit.ly/c7Vg3C>

**Time Magazine, May 9 2011**

<http://ti.me/SqNDX3>

**The New Republic, July 18 2011**

<http://bit.ly/oVK95a>

**The New Yorker, April 25, 2011**

<http://nyr.kr/q0jgEQ>

**USA Today, June 6 2011**

<http://usat.ly/kHINCp>

**Wall Street Journal, February 25 2011**

<http://on.wsj.com/if7WIU>

**LA Times articles**

<http://lat.ms/NEuVew>

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11 Search Results for "josh Fox" Gasland'

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"josh Fox" Gasland'

All (11)

Sort by: **Relevance** | Date

**Story (9)**

## Clouded readings of EPA study of Dimock water, featured in 'Gasland'

By Neela Banerjee

Video (1)



Story | *March 21, 2012* | 4:51 PM

...significantly contaminated. Six families shared their EPA reports with **Josh Fox**, the Pennsylvania-based director of the Oscar -nominated documentary, 'Gasland,' who, in turn, relayed the data to Water Defense and ProPublica. The...

Photos (1)

Any Time

## How HBO's 'Gasland' documentary hit the natural gas biz where it hurts

LAT Blogs

Past 24 hours

Story | *October 19, 2010* | 9:32 PM

Past 4 days

Amid my column Monday talking about the latest hot-button documentaries, I found myself wondering, for all the media attention lavished on controversial documentaries like "Fahrenheit 9/11," do they really change anyone's minds?

Past week

Past month

## Oscar voters tackle gas 'fracking' controversy

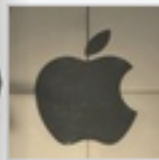
Rebecca Keegan

Story | *February 15, 2011* | 4:33 PM

Add one more unlikely group to the list of people debating the controversial process of hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" -- Oscar voters. Energy in Depth, a group representing oil and natural gas producers, has sent a letter to the Academy...



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MEDIA & MARKETING | February 25, 2011, 5:34 p.m. ET

# Oscar's Attention Irks Gas Industry

Article

Comments (57)

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By BEN CASSELMAN

A A

"Gasland," a low-budget documentary about alleged perils of natural-gas drilling, is up for an Oscar on Sunday, much to the chagrin of energy executives.

In fact, the natural-gas industry is so infuriated by the film that officials mounted an unsuccessful effort earlier this month to have it barred from the Academy Awards.



Enlarge Image

Getty Images

Josh Fox speaks during a recent news conference on Capitol Hill.

Their objections drew more attention to the film—and to what some in the natural-gas business think is a worsening image problem for the industry.

Much of the controversy has centered on a process called hydraulic fracturing, also known as "fracking," in which water and chemicals are injected into the ground to break open gas-bearing rocks. Environmental groups say the process can contaminate drinking-water

supplies, a charge the industry denies.



## Power Companies HATE This!

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## Josh Fox's view: Ban fracking now

By Josh Fox

Updated 6/6/2011 7:07 PM | [70](#) | [4](#) [Share](#)

In April 2009, I was standing in Amee Ellsworth's kitchen in [Weld County, Colo.](#), an area that was being drilled for natural gas. She was making sandwiches for me and my film crew and explaining how she had been showering in the dark for months, afraid that a spark from the overhead light bulb in her bathroom would light her water on fire and blow up her house. She could light her tap water on fire right out of the kitchen sink. The cause of what she described as "sheer terror" was hydraulic fracture-drilling, or fracking, for natural gas.

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### OUR VIEW: 'Fracking' with care holds key to energy future

America is waking up to the slowly unfolding disaster of fracking, and not a second too soon. The controversial drilling practice, which has transformed gas drilling in the U.S. and abroad, is used to extract natural gas from rock formations by injecting huge amounts of water mixed with toxic and carcinogenic chemicals at such high pressures that it actually cracks apart underground formations.

The problem is that everywhere the gas drilling industry goes, a trail of water contamination, air pollution, health concerns and betrayal of basic American civic and community values follows. And with drilling happening in large swaths of residential and public lands in 34 states, a movement against fracking has sprung up in its wake.

I have spent the past three years investigating fracking for natural gas, and some of that journey can be seen in my Oscar-nominated film *Gasland*. Everyday the facts of fracking become clearer. The process is inherently contaminating, and no amount of regulation can make it safe for people living near or downriver from it. Chemicals used in the fracking fluid are turning up in groundwater in drilling areas from Colorado to Pennsylvania.

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## Drilling Down

Articles in the Drilling Down series from The New York Times examine the risks of natural-gas drilling and efforts to regulate this rapidly growing industry.

Questions, additional information or related tips can be sent to [urbina@nytimes.com](mailto:urbina@nytimes.com).

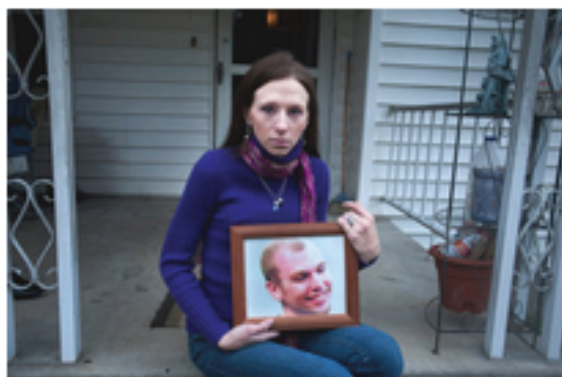
MAY 15, 2012 | LONG HOURS FOR TRUCKING

### Deadliest Danger Isn't at the Rig but on the Road

By IAN URBINA

Highway crashes are the largest cause of fatalities in the oil industry, partly because of safety exemptions that allow truckers to work longer hours than other drivers.

- Documents: The Oil Field Exemptions
- Graphic: Death on the Job



Meg Roussos for The New York Times

Crystal Roth's husband, Timothy, an oil field worker from West Virginia, was killed in a company truck that crashed in his home state last year when the driver fell asleep.

DEC. 31, 2011 | ON THIRSTY GROUND

### Hunt for Gas Hits Fragile Soil, and South Africans Fear Risks

By IAN URBINA

A plan to drill for natural gas in the Karoo region of South Africa would use millions of gallons of water in a drought-stricken area.

- Graphic: Major Shale Gas Basins



Liaan Pretorius for The New York Times

DEC. 1, 2011 | LANDOWNERS AND LANDMEN

### Learning Too Late of Perils in Gas Well Leases



#### Related Coverage

- Jan. 29, 2012  
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Lawmakers Seek Inquiry of Natural Gas Industry
- May 6, 2011  
Chu Names Panel to Study Fracking
- April 16, 2011  
Chemicals Were Injected Into Wells, Report Says
- April 7, 2011  
Pennsylvania Calls for More Water Tests



Oilmen often attribute the accelerated growth in the Bakken to what Bud Brigham calls North Dakota's "conducive regulatory climate." Hydraulic fracturing has become enormously controversial, and other plays throughout the country are being slowed by concerns that fracking accidents have contaminated drinking water. "Gasland," an anti-fracking documentary that was nominated for an Oscar this year, showed residents of Colorado whose tap water contained so much methane gas—apparently from leaking wells underfoot—that a cigarette lighter held to a spigot set the water on fire. The Environmental Protection Agency's last official study of fracking, in 2004, concluded that it poses "little or no threat" to water-supply safety, but the report was faulted for relying too heavily on scientists employed by the oil industry. The agency set up a new study and expects to deliver its initial results by the end of 2012.

Fracking's public image has probably not been helped by a regulatory loophole that, until recently, enabled the producers of fracturing fluid to keep its contents secret. According to a study commissioned last year by Tudor Pickering Holt, an investment bank that focusses on the energy industry, the fluid is "99.5 percent water." The rest is a combination of, among other substances, guar gum (used in cosmetics and ice cream), isopropanol (glass cleaner), potassium chloride (salt substitute), ethylene glycol (antifreeze), and various acids used to clean swimming pools.

Proponents point out that hydraulic fracturing has been common in oil fields for sixty years and is currently used in perhaps eighty per cent of America's gas wells. "The use of old, poorly cemented wells—not fracking—is what can cause stray gas to leak into the water supply," Terry Engelder, a geologist at Penn State who has often defended the technique, told me. "That's something you'll find with any type of underground well, even a water well." However, "there have been instances of chemicals spilling in aboveground accidents," he said. "The industry has to do a better job of mitigating risk."

Lynn Helms, the chief mineral-resources regulator in North Dakota, told me, "There are some legitimate risks to simply getting frack chemicals to the well. You've got thirty gallons of biohazard at a well site that can be very dangerous in its concentrated form." In November, after there were two spills at well sites in North Dakota (neither of which, apparently, contaminated the public water



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# Shale Gas Isn't Actually Evil. But the Shale Gas Industry is Behaving Stupidly.

Michael Levi July 18, 2011 | 12:00 am 3 comments Print



In the marquee scene from the 2010 documentary *Gasland*, nominated earlier this year for an Academy Award, a man is shown warily holding a lighter underneath his running kitchen faucet. The flame quickly ignites the tapwater, briefly producing a fireball in the sink. Something appears to have gone wrong—and the culprit, the film inveighs, is the sinister local shale gas industry.

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## KUWAIT ON THE PRAIRIE

*Can North Dakota solve the energy problem?*

BY ERIC KONIGSBERG

APRIL 25, 2011

Recommend 466 +1



*A crew in the Williston Basin, which contains billions of barrels of oil—enough to supply the country for years, if it can be safely extracted. The boom, one resident said, has brought “free money.” Photograph by Thomas Struth.*

**N**orth Dakota is booming. Its unemployment rate is the lowest in

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# Chilling Images of Drilling's Perils, Met by Numbed Eyes

By PETER APPLEBOME  
Published: June 9, 2010

WALTON, N.Y.

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Tap water is set ablaze in an image from the documentary "Gasland." The film was recently screened at a gathering mostly opposed to upstate drilling.

**Related**

[Gasland Trailer \(youtube.com\)](#)

Times Topic: [Peter Applebome](#)

The occasion was the screening of "Gasland," a polemical and quite frightening documentary on the impact of the new generation of gas drilling coming to upstate New York. But, given the news, there was also plenty of talk about that huge well explosion everyone had heard about.

No, not that one far away in the Gulf of Mexico. Closer to home was the [natural gas](#) blowout last week in the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania that shot gas and water polluted with drilling fluids as high as 75 feet into the air until it was finally shut down 16 hours later.

As our numbed eyes witness every night on the news, stuff happens, particularly when it comes to extracting hydrocarbons. So here in the far reaches of the Catskills the issues in the film weren't abstract, and the gulf wasn't so far away. They were the stuff of daily politics, pitting neighbor against neighbor, revolving around two questions: Is the risk worth the reward? What's the alternative?

For this crowd, overwhelmingly antidrilling, the first answer was easy. The second, well, we're all waiting.

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## Onshore Drilling Disasters Waiting to Happen: An Interview With 'Gasland' Director Josh Fox

Nora Eisenberg June 17, 2010



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Theater and film director Josh Fox's documentary *Gasland* explores the new generation of natural gas drilling, which for a decade has been blasting its way east across the country, tapping shale formations from the Rockies to Pennsylvania, and is now expanding in New York. Fox is only 37, but he is a veteran explorer of complex themes from militarism to war to globalization and torture who skillfully blends artistry and social message. *Gasland* is more straightforward than Fox's earlier experimental mixes of theater, dance, music and film, but no less striking. Winner of the Special Jury Prize for Documentary at Sundance, where it premiered in January, *Gasland* has been causing a stir wherever it has gone since. Now a national audience can see Josh Fox's film when it airs on HBO on Monday, June 21.



In 2008, a gas company offered Fox \$100,000 to lease his family's nineteen acres in Milanville, Pennsylvania, for the purpose of "hydraulic fracturing" to extract natural gas. He was baffled—what was hydraulic fracturing and what would leasing his land for fracking mean? To find out, he set out on a cross-country journey from his home in the pristine Upper Delaware River Basin to places where hydrofracking had already begun: Dimock, Pennsylvania; Pavillion, Wyoming; Weld County, Colorado; and Fort Worth, Texas