



On what many New Yorkers deemed a snow day, one overflowing gallery in the city was filled with artists and activists who decided to leave their warm apartments and hot chocolates behind in support of a cause worthy of traipsing through the snow. The event was "Fracking and Its Effects: A Panel Discussion," in support of Exit Art's "Fracking: Art and Activism Against the Drill," an exhibit open through February 5th.

The panel was hosted by Mark Ruffalo, an acclaimed actor/activist known among Huffington Post readers for his insightful pieces, famous among film watchers for his recent award-nominated performance in "The Kids Are All Right," and now infamous among government officials as a man who won't stop talking about fracking.

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, is a process that can be used to retrieve natural gas. It involves injecting chemicals, sand, and millions of gallons of water into shale rock. The shale is then shattered, releasing trapped gas. The problem is that when the gas comes to the surface, some water returns as well, and this water is often tainted with poisonous, carcinogenic chemicals.

The harmful effects of fracking are all too tangible, and Mark Ruffalo will be the first to tell you this. His friend's one-lane country road became a 30-foot highway for sonar pounding, and the quiet region of New York where Mark lives with his family may soon be destroyed by natural gas drilling.

Fracking ramification reports are terrifying, to say the least - after drinking water near fracking well sites, livers/hearts/respiratory systems fail, rare forms of cancer mysteriously grow, and cows drop dead.

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