


A satellite view of Earth from space, showing a vast expanse of dark blue oceans and swirling white clouds. The perspective is from a high altitude, looking down at the planet's surface. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

INHABIT

A PERMACULTURE PERSPECTIVE


A sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow and a reflection on the dark water. Several birds are silhouetted against the sky, some in flight.

Humanity is more than ever threatened by its own actions; we hear a lot about the need to minimize footprints and to reduce our impact. But what if our footprints were beneficial? What if we could meet human needs while increasing the health and well-being of our planet?

This is the premise behind permaculture: a design process based on the replication of patterns found in nature.

INHABIT explores the many environmental issues facing us today and examines solutions that are being applied using the ecological design lens of permaculture. Focused mostly on the Northeastern and Midwestern regions of the United States, Inhabit provides an intimate look at permaculture peoples and practices ranging from rural, suburban, and urban landscapes.



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape during sunset. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and purple. Below the horizon, rolling green hills and fields are visible, interspersed with clusters of trees. A winding road or path cuts through the landscape. In the foreground, a dense forest of trees is visible, with a small building and a few vehicles parked nearby. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Type to enter text

Press Contact:

INFO@InhabitFilm.com

www.INHABITFILM.com

www.FaceBook.com/InhabitFilm

Director Statement

Costa Boutsikaris

While in Film School at Rutgers University I found myself researching and watching all kinds of films about the environmental calamities that were surrounding us throughout the world: Climate Change, Food InSecurity, Air and Water Pollution, and on and on...there was no end to the very real ecological and agricultural emergencies that the earth was confronted with. It was depressing...and overwhelming.. ...and I began wondering if there were really any solutions. I started looking into new ways of agriculture, small-scale farming, off-the-grid self-sufficiency and eventually I stumbled upon a movement that called itself by a new word: Permaculture.

Permaculture, a compound amalgam of “permanent” and “agriculture,” encompasses the idea of creating a regenerative AGRICULTURE that has the PERMANENCE and resilience of nature. What was so compelling and different about the Permaculture movement was its beautiful vision of a resilient society and the clear roadmap it offered for getting there. It is a design framework that looks to ecosystems for inspiration, using natural principles to weave human systems into the landscape.

And I found that Permaculture wasn't limited to farming and gardening—it could also be applied to how we design our homes, our energy systems, our economies, and ultimately, our culture.. While the modern environmental movement has focused on the idea of lowering our footprint and being “less bad,” the Permaculture movement attempts to reverse that narrative by teaching how we might make the inevitable impact of our footprint a healing force.



In 2011 I took a permaculture course taught by Andrew Faust, an ecological designer and teacher in New York City and then went on to study around the Northeast, meeting dozens of like-minded folks who have put permaculture into action in their lives and in their communities. Inspired, humbled and ignited I felt a desire to share this experience and create an on-ramp for others who are also searching for tangible solutions. In 2012 I launched my first Kickstarter and raised \$4,000 (Even I was surprised!) and I set about to convert my 1982 Volkswagen Van into a veggie-oil-solar-powered-filmmaking-mobile-unit! Emmett Brennan came on board as producer and traveling partner, and together, in 2013 we set off on a 5 month journey visiting over twenty different sites ranging from large scale commercial farms to suburban homesteads with backyard gardens to urban parks with farmers' markets and almost everything in between.

We spent time in a one hundred acre permaculture farm in Wisconsin among cows and pigs roaming happily under the shade of nut and fruit trees. I was led through a rain garden in Camden, New Jersey where local kids had designed and installed waterways redirecting floods from the streets to create lush

gardens. I tasted the morning harvest of paw-paws and kiwis as an urban homesteader walked me with his son through their backyard plot in Holyoke, Massachusetts. These and many more are the stories of INHABIT.

The reality of our many environmental issues and unsustainable economic patterns can be overwhelming and disempowering. But the most compelling part of Permaculture is its aim to help design a world that we can transition into, rather than continue fighting against. Buckminster Fuller once said "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

My hope is that INHABIT will continue to inspire others to see what a better world could look like and that it provides a compass for thinking about where we can go next.



Filmmaker Bios

Costa Boutsikaris // Director/Cinematographer/Editor

Costa grew up in the Hudson River Valley of New York. He studied filmmaking at the New York Film Academy and went on to receive a BA in Visual Arts and Film at Rutgers University. During his Senior year he took a Permaculture Design Course in New York City which began his fascination with ecological design and regenerative agriculture. After traveling around the Northeast US for a year learning more about this design philosophy and living at permaculture sites he was inspired to make his first feature documentary. After raising funds on Kickstarter he converted a 1982 VW Van to run on vegetable oil and solar panels and began a three year journey to make INHABIT.

Emmett Brennan// Producer/Asst. Dir.

Emmett is a native of New England. He attended Parsons, The New School for Design, and Bard College. His creativity, spirituality, tendency towards systems-thinking, and his connection to plants and animals inform the expressions of his films. Inhabit is his second feature length production following 'To The Moon,' a documentary that explored cooperatives. He has worked on a variety of other smaller projects, and is currently developing the story for a new documentary involving living spiritual masters.



Interview with the Director:

by Kelly Fragale from Reality Sandwich



What inspired you to make this film?

I took a Permaculture Design Course four years ago that radically altered my perspective on the true problems we are facing as a species and planet. In making this film, I wanted to explore how this design process can be used in different landscapes to help integrate human systems with ecological systems. We traveled to over twenty different sites ranging from large scale farms, to suburban homesteads and urban parks. The goal was to share a collage of stories and replicable solutions that are being successfully implemented across the Northeast/Midwest.

What is Permaculture by your own personal definition?

Permaculture is a design framework that looks to ecosystems for inspiration, and uses these principles to weave human systems into the landscape. The word is a combination of “permanent” and “agriculture.”



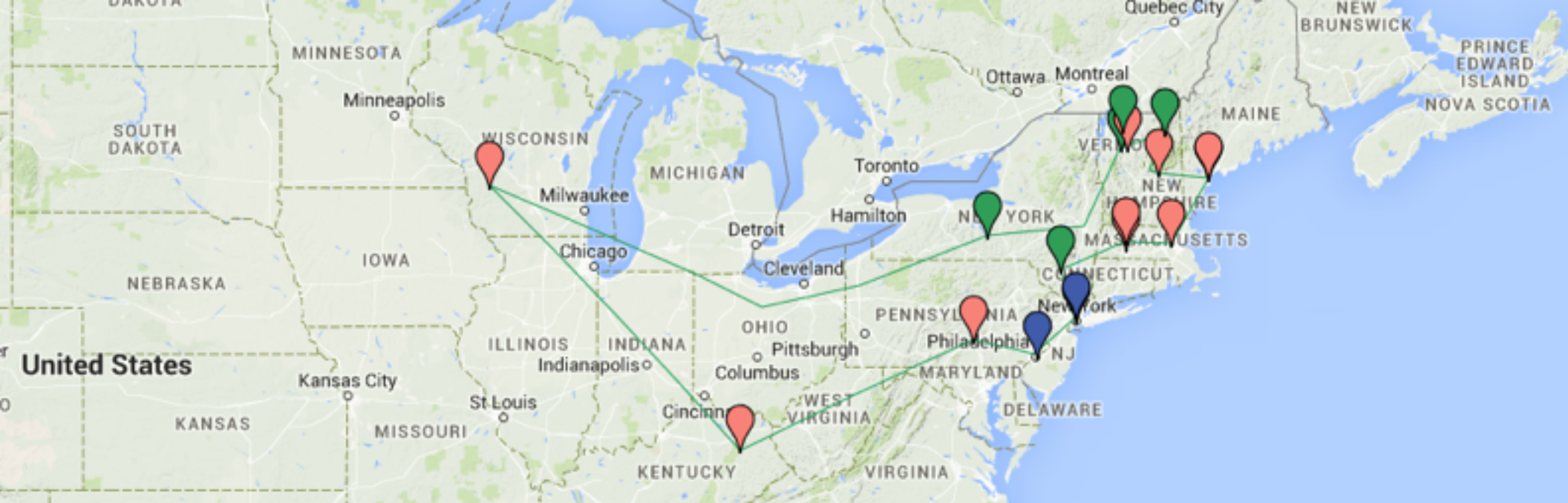
Fundamentally, permaculture strives to create a regenerative agriculture that has the permanence and resilience of nature. This design process can also be applied to how we design our homes, energy systems, economies, and ultimately our culture. It's a

Did you learn anything new or gain any insights during the filming?

During this trip, we were able to witness and capture many forms of ecological design systems in action. We spent time in a 100 acre permaculture farm in Wisconsin amongst cows and pigs roaming happily under the shade of nut and fruit trees. I was led through a rain garden in Camden, New Jersey where local students captured rainwater overflow from the streets to grow native plants. We tasted the morning harvest of paw-paws and kiwis as an urban homesteader walked with his son through their backyard forest garden. It was very hopeful to see theories of permaculture in practice, and very exciting to encounter the surprisingly diverse variety of landscapes in which it is being applied.

When did you encounter permaculture?

I stumbled upon Permaculture videos online in 2009 while researching peak oil and alternative agriculture. I was struck by its beautiful focus on a vision for what the world could look like, and clear roadmap for getting there. The following year, I took a course with Andrew Faust in NYC and then went on to study around the Northeast.



Who did you make this movie for, the permaculture community or the general public?

Both! We want to introduce Permaculture to people in a more accessible and compelling way while also giving permies a deeper insight into success stories from around the Northeast. We are hoping to help shape the new cultural narrative and help share these vision of regeneration.

What are you hoping the takeaway is for people just learning about Permaculture?

Permaculture design can help guide all types of human systems toward greater ecological integration and sustainability. These strategies go way beyond just theory and are showing signs of real on the ground success in communities and farms across the Northeast/Midwest. By partnering with ecology and biology we can build a much more secure society that future generations will be proud to take on.

Is it relevant for people not living on the East Coast?

While the film was shot in the Northeast and Midwest the solutions we documented can be replicated in all parts of the world and the design theory is universal. This film is relevant for anyone interested in ecological design and permaculture theories being put into practice.

