



guest lecture
Jon Mooallem

“billy and teddy: fear, disinterest and compassion for wildlife”
thursday | february 20 | 5pm | marston exploration theater | ISTB4 building

The birth of the teddy bear, inspired by a well-publicized incident during President Theodore Roosevelt’s black bear-hunting trip to Mississippi in 1902, was an idiosyncratic signal of a larger shift in the United States’ imaginative relationship with bears and other predators at the turn of the 20th century: Americans feared and exterminated bears, but all of a sudden, they also wanted to give a bear a hug. Seven years later, supporters of President-elect William Howard Taft promoted the incoming administration’s answer to the teddy bear: the Billy Possum. The toy was not a success. It was creepy-looking. Nobody liked it. These two case studies are used to explore how Americans think and feel about wild animals.

Jon Mooallem has been a Contributing Writer to the *New York Times Magazine* since 2006 and is also writer at large for *Pop-Up Magazine*. Jon Mooallem will present this lecture, which is co-sponsored by the School of Life Sciences, as part of the IHR Andrew W. Mellon Foundation /Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes funded “Humanities for the Environment” project.

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For more information on the “Humanities for the Environment” project
<https://chcnetwork.org/humanities-for-the-environment-north-american-observatory-update-west-cluster/>

To RSVP <https://ihr.asu.edu/node/1549/register>