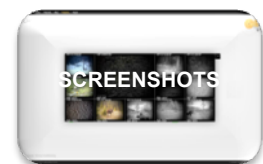
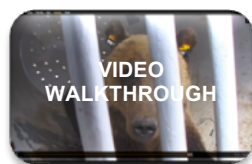


**CANADA AT THE CUTTING EDGE:
 WORLD PREMIERE OF NEW NFB INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY BEAR 71**
 Jeremy Mendes and Leanne Allison's interactive doc premieres
 at Sundance Film Festival—and online at nfb.ca/bear71



Montreal, January 19, 2012 – The National Film Board of Canada's leadership in groundbreaking interactive web productions will be showcased at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival (January 19–29, 2012) with the world premiere of *Bear 71* <nfb.ca/bear71>. The *Bear 71* multi-user online experience will be launched with a dual-city installation entitled "Bear 71 Live." The installation will be featured at The Yard in Park City as part of the festival's New Frontier program and includes a live performance on January 20. "Bear 71 Live" will also be at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art in Salt Lake City, from January 19 to April 19.

Bear 71 is the most recent example of how the NFB, Canada's public producer and distributor, is radically changing the face of cinema in the art form's second century. Under the visionary leadership of Government Film Commissioner Tom Perlmutter, the NFB is committed to spearheading productions that haven't yet been imagined, with technology that hasn't yet been invented. Since its founding in 1939, the NFB has won over 5,000 awards, including 12 Oscars, and has recently secured 4 Webby Awards—the Oscars of the Internet.

"I am driven to unravel that which we do not know, to imagine what is not imaginable; to explore the expressive potential of the digital space to reveal the work in ways that we have never seen," says Perlmutter, architect of the pioneering NFB digital strategy.

Bear 71 blurs the line between the wild world and the wired one in an interactive multi-user online experience told from the point of view of a female grizzly bear, dubbed "Bear 71" by the park rangers who track her. The bear's story speaks to how we coexist with wildlife in the age of networks, surveillance and digital information.

Audiences use an augmented reality application to explore the bear's world—a vividly reimagined "nature" seen through the lens of technology and featuring thousands of trail-cam images of wild animals in their natural environment. Users can also interact using their webcam and engage through social media channels that involve elements of gameplay; for instance, they are asked to answer the question, "What kind of animal are you?" To create *Bear 71*, co-director Leanne Allison gained access to one million photos gathered covertly in the wilderness by motion-triggered cameras over 11 years. Renowned Canadian actress Mia Kirshner (*Exotica*, *24*, *The L Word*) provides a poignant performance throughout the web experience as the voice of Bear 71.

Bear 71 website users can also interact in real time with the live installation and be present "virtually" at Sundance. The live installation is a unique experience that harnesses facial detection software, augmented reality, motion sensors, wireless trail-cam QR codes, projection and data visualization. Festival goers (and website users) become animals who are tracked within the story world of *Bear 71* and "captured" via photos placed on a "surveillance wall."

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 User name: va-guest Password: g3v72ss
 FTP access for media only. Please do not share this information.

Bear 71 highlights how our growing dependence on technology divorces us from nature even while allowing us to keep closer tabs on it. It also raises questions about how we view nature, how we view ourselves in relation to technology and nature, and about the nature and validity of surveillance both in the wild and in human society.

For more information on other NFB productions at the 2012 Sundance festival, visit www.sundance.org/festival/.

About the **Bear 71** creative team

Leanne Allison (Creator) is a Gemini Award-winning filmmaker who takes audiences far off the beaten path to explore the experiences of endangered wildlife. Her credits include the NFB documentaries [Being Caribou](#) and [Finding Farley](#), made with her husband Karsten Heuer.

Jeremy Mendes (Creator) is a Vancouver-based artist with over 10 years' experience working on interactive projects. A three-time Webby Award winner, he is currently working freelance on interactive projects with the NFB's Digital Studio.

J.B. MacKinnon (Screenwriter) is a Canadian independent journalist, contributing editor and book editor. MacKinnon is best known for co-authoring with Alisa Smith the bestselling book *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating*, which encourages readers to focus on local eating as a way to address current environmental and economic issues. MacKinnon currently lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Loc Dao (Executive Producer/Producer) is the executive producer and creative technologist for the NFB's Digital Studio. He is also the creative producer of **Bear 71**. In December 2011, he was named Canada's Top Digital Producer for 2011 at the Digi Awards. His recent credits include the web documentary [Welcome to Pine Point](#), winner of two Webby Awards.

Rob McLaughlin (Executive Producer/Producer) is currently an Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Publisher at Postmedia newspapers in Canada, and is considered one of the country's leading innovators in the field of factual interactive content. His work has been awarded dozens of international honours, including the 2011 and 2010 Webby Awards for Best Online Documentary programs.

David Christensen (Executive Producer/Producer) is the Executive Producer at the National Film Board of Canada's North West Centre. Prior to joining the NFB, David was a producer and director with Agitprop Films. His credits include the NFB/NHK co-production [War Hospital](#) and the Genie-nominated dramatic feature *Six Figures*, as well as *Writing Icons* (1999), *The Breath of God* (2002) and a feature documentary on the Bhopal gas disaster entitled *The Heart Becomes Quiet* (2002).

Bonnie Thompson (Producer) is a National Film Board of Canada producer working out of the North West Centre in Edmonton. Thompson has produced projects with media makers across Canada. She has over 50 credits on a range of productions, including documentaries, features, animation and interactive web projects. Thompson is currently producing the feature animation project *Wall*, directed by animator Cam Christiansen.

Lance Weiler (Installation Co-Creator) is a storyteller, entrepreneur and thought leader. An alumnus of the Sundance Screenwriting Lab, he is recognized as a pioneer because of the way he mixes storytelling and technology. *WIRED* magazine named him "one of 25 people helping to re-invent entertainment and change the face of Hollywood." He sits on a World Economic Forum steering committee for the future of content creation and teaches at Columbia University on the art, craft and business of storytelling in the 21st century. Lance is currently working on a trilogy of participatory storytelling projects, the first of which took place this past fall and included an actual space launch.

Jam3 (Web Designer/Developer) is a Toronto-based digital design and development agency founded in 2003 by Adrian Belina, Pablo Vio and Mark McQuillan. This year, Jam3 won Best Design Team and Best Development Team at the Digi Awards.

About the National Film Board of Canada

Canada's public producer and distributor, the National Film Board of Canada creates [interactive works](#), social-issue documentaries, auteur animation and alternative dramas that provide the world with a unique Canadian perspective. The NFB is developing the entertainment forms of the future in groundbreaking interactive productions, while pioneering new directions in 3D stereoscopic film, community-based media, and more. It works in collaboration with emerging and established filmmakers, digital media creators and co-producers in every region of Canada, with Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities, as well as partners around the world. Since the NFB's founding in 1939, it has created over 13,000 productions and won over 5,000 awards, including 4 Webbys, 12 Oscars and more than 90 Genies. Over 2,000 NFB productions can be streamed online, at the <[NFB.ca](#)> Screening Room as well as via partnerships with the world's leading video portals, while the NFB's growing family of [apps](#) for smartphones, tablets and connected TV delivers the experience of cinema to Canadians everywhere.

Based in Vancouver, the **NFB's groundbreaking English-language Digital Studio** has produced some of the world's most acclaimed interactive projects, including [Welcome to Pine Point](#), [The Test Tube with David Suzuki](#) and [Waterlife](#). To view an archive of the NFB's interactive productions, please visit <[nfb.ca/interactive](#)>.

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For U.S. media requests

Debra Anderson
Telephone: 347-463-9023
Cell: 917-363-6027
E-mail: debra@cultureshockny.com
Twitter: [@debraeanderson](#)

For Canadian and International media requests

Jennifer Mair, NFB Publicist
Telephone: 416-954-2045
Cell: 416-436-0105
E-mail: j.mair@nfb.ca
Twitter: [@NFB_Jennifer](#)

Lily Robert, Director, Corporate Communications, NFB
Telephone: 514-283-3838
Cell: 514-296-8261
E-mail: l.robert@nfb.ca