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# Student Feature Series: Mackenzie McGhie

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**COLUMN: SPOTLIGHT****BY: Mackenzie McGhie**

Mackenzie McGhie is an emerging museum professional currently studying Museum Management and Curatorship at Fleming College. She completed her Bachelor of Fine arts at the university of Ottawa, and her Masters in Art History at the University of Toronto, where her interest in curating, collections management and the study of ethical standards began to develop. From both a personal and professional standpoint Mackenzie has aspirations to make cultural heritage more accessible, inclusive, and engaging for diverse audiences. In her eyes, Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums are places of mutual respect, where individuals can come together and feel welcome to converse freely on a plethora of topics.

Her area of research revolves around European art history of the late modern period which saw significant transformations influenced by a wide range of social, political, and technological changes that are mimicked in today's world. With this in mind, Mackenzie seeks to incorporate innovative ways to connect people through cultural materials and democratize the sharing of knowledge to ensure no story is lost to history. Her long-term goal is to step into a curatorial role where she can combine her love of teaching and collections care to engage the public in lifelong learning.

## **Sustainable Tourism: A Team Effort**

In September 2024, the World Heritage Fund published a **press release** outlining the key issues facing heritage sites around the globe today. These concerns include war and conflict, rapid urbanization, climate change, lack of funding, and the topic I wish to focus on, overtourism. Both **UNESCO** and the **World Monuments Fund** list unchecked tourism among the leading dangers to heritage sites across the world. Despite this, countries such as Greece—which depend heavily on tourism for economic stability—have begun prioritizing sustainability initiatives.



Visitors to the Acropolis, Greece / Mackenzie McGhie 2023

Katerina Kikilia, head of the Department of Tourism Management at the University of West Attica in Greece, acknowledged in a **statement** that the tourism sector is absolutely essential for the Greek economy, which is “exactly why we need to make it [tourism] more sustainable.” In line with this, the **UN World Tourism Organization** emphasizes the need to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the goals of cultural preservation, as neither can thrive without the other.





Archaeological site of Mycenae, Greece / Mackenzie McGhie 2023

When exploring sustainable tourism, it has become abundantly clear to me that there is no clear-cut solution. Success will only occur when community stakeholders and tourists alike work together to ensure the longevity of sites like the UNESCO listed Acropolis, the Archeological site of Mycenae, Delphi, and others. To this effect, Greece's **National Tourism Organization** has recently joined a growing number of initiatives across Europe that encourage tourists to explore destinations beyond the most popular sites and to consider travelling at off-peak times to ease overcrowding on popular tourist sites. As more sites throughout Greece implement **strict guidelines**, such as limiting the number of visitors allowed on-site at any given time—these measure also serve tourists by reducing long waits and helping them make the most of their time. In this sense, bringing tourists into the conversation is key to encouraging sustainable travelling practices and developing a mutually beneficial relationship.









Archaeological site of Delphi, Greece/ Mackenzie McGhie 2023

This approach would also avoid the unfortunate— but necessary— **regulations** introduced by Greece’s Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni to address over-tourism. In 2024, substantial strides have been taken to suppress short term rental units and adjust fees during peak periods in places often flooded with people each year. For example, beginning in 2025, a 20-euro levy will be imposed on cruise ship visitors to the islands of Santorini and Mykonos during the peak summer season. Additionally, to combat rising rental costs and increase housing availability, Prime Minister Mitsotakis has announced new incentives, disincentives, and restrictions for short-term rental property owners. These efforts aim to ease the strain caused by the constant influx of tourists on both local communities and the heritage sites they visit.

This year, the World Monuments Watch published a new list which places overtourism and sustainability as a main concern for the international heritage sector. This updated list, last published in 2022, features more sites than ever before calling for aid with their tourism plans for the future, seeking support in developing strategies that balance preservation goals and a fulfilled visitor experience in the hopes of finding a viable way forward.

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