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Design and Technology MFA Candidates Create App Promoting Responsible Tourism and

Sustainability for Their Thesis

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Raha Ghassemi and **Shikha Singh,** MFA candidates in the Parsons Design and Technology program are creating an app for their thesis that will help tourists navigate cities in a fun, responsible and sustainable way.

Hear more about their thoughts on responsible tourism and their app.

Q: What does "responsible tourism" mean to you?Cities are constantly working towards creating a better image of themselves to the world, while working towards developing their economies. At the center of all this lie the people -- the people of the city who play hosts and then the people who come from all over to visit. To us, responsible tourism means taking responsibility for our actions and behavior when visiting a city other than our own. It means the tourists are aware and conscious of their actions and how it affects their surroundings.**Q: What led to your interest in responsible tourism and sustainability?**Our passion for travel and our love for the big city plays a

huge role in evoking our interest in the concepts of responsible tourism and sustainability. We both care about more than just seeing the world, we want to do it in an unselfish way. We've traveled extensively and also witnessed the environmental degradation of the cities we come from. Our huge appreciation and love for different cultures drives us to act towards preserving and respecting the history and culture of the places we visit. We want to contribute positively to every place we go, and equip everyone with the ability to do the same. We want people to welcome tourists, want them there, enjoy their company, make lifelong friends, and look forward to a visit to their cities as well. We want to create a sense of respect for other people's cultures, both in terms of physical landmarks and habits and behaviors.**Q: What inspired you to design an app, and how will it encourage more sustainable tourism?**A tourist is a person who is constantly on the move. Mobility and the ability to have access to information wherever they go is an important contributor of enhancing travel. Thus a mobile app was the only way to go. A map-based interface that relies on location-based information is what we felt would have the greatest impact with our user. It's what you need, right when you need it. Context

is always important.**Q: What types of actions will your app encourage responsible tourists to take, and why?** A: We want to provide information that lets them see how crowded certain popular attractions are before they go, and also help make a conscious effort to support each cities' ethical small business economy. As part of the map-based interface, users will not only see where these small businesses are, but where the closest water taps are to refill their reusable bottles. We'll be sending them "Tips and tricks" for an environmentally, socially, and culturally conscious travel experience. Things like: Always carry a reusable bottle, and Don't forget to cover your shoulders when you enter a church in Rome. Some of these will be location-based notifications.

Check out their presentation on their app

Check out the screen recording of their app

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