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What's your Scene?

by: [Arden Jobling-Hey](#) in: [Editor's Desk](#)

The double-edge of film-induced tourism

As long as we, the audience, demand new and exciting Hollywood stories, movie makers will continue to release feature films that blow our minds with incredible landscapes, beckoning us to start planning our next exotic getaway. Consequently, tourists will continue to travel in hoards to their favourite movie hotspots. Not bad for countries like Australia who invest millions ahead of time, kicking-off a "Come Walkabout" campaign just as the film *Australia* hit the big screen, but what does "film-induced tourism" mean for people living on the ground?

In some areas of the world, it seems that residents are more than willing to profit from the influx of tourists flocking to scenes of their favourite Hollywood moments. Just ask the owners of Jens Hansen Gold and Silversmith store in Nelson, New Zealand whose small shop has become a tourist venue, thanks to legendary *Lord of the Rings* for whom the shop initially made the movie's main prop (the ring) that has since become a symbol of all that is Hobbit. According to a recent article in the Toronto Star, over 20,000 *Lord of the Ring* fans now follow in the teeny tiny footsteps of Hobbit folk annually, visiting the diverse wilderness of New Zealand featured throughout the film.

For others, like citizens of Salzburg, Austria, home to the 1965 sensation *The Sound of Music*, the crowds are a particular bother. According to an article from the Globe and Mail, locals in Salzburg tried fruitlessly to block attempts to turn the building portrayed as home to the family von Trapp into a hotel, fearing they would tie up traffic and be an annoyance to the local population. As the article suggests, despite the additional income the movie brings to the old city, more than 600 residents signed a petition 3 years ago in order to successfully stall the building of a museum dedicated to the film.

It's not only the people who get disturbed as a result of film-induced tourism. In a book on the impact of film-induced tourism, Sue Beeton talks about how Maya beach, in southern Thailand, was bulldozed wide open and much of the native vegetation removed during preparations for the movie, *The Beach*. Following the sensation on screen, thousands began making trips from nearby islands to the one that was portrayed in the movie as an untouched paradise; prior to shooting, one might even have ventured to say that it was "off the beaten path". These days, even the Krabi-Tourism board cautions potential tourists that they will have to share the beach with 30+ speedboats and longtail boats (Thai fishing boats) parked on the shore, and ferries with boatfuls of tourists swimming in from deeper waters.

As we prepare for the upcoming winter issue of Verge Magazine and the "Tread Lightly" feature

that encourages everybody to travel with a conscience, it is important to remember that not all film-induced tourism is welcomed by the people, or environment, that were there first. That being said, why not relive those Hollywood moments with little to no impact on the ground? Meet the love of your life on top of the Empire State Building a la *When Harry met Sally*, or try to spot the angels in Rome as you journey through the story of the *Da Vinci Code*. And, if you do head to Salzburg for the original Sound of Music Tour, try your best to blend in and don't be one of those annoying tourists the residents love to hate.



ARDEN JOBLING-HEY

outreach, events

Originally from Toronto, Arden has studied, volunteered and worked her way around the world. From promoting HIV/AIDS awareness as an international volunteer in Tanzania and teaching business English in Germany, to exploring hidden treasures of the Turkish bazaar and accepting a fairy tale proposal amidst the dunes of the Moroccan dessert. Arden believes that as long as there are unknown lands to discover, the adventure never ends! She holds an M.A in International Communications and Development from City University London in the UK and has worked as a freelance writer and a development practitioner for a number of NGOs.

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