Why did you choose to study in the School of the Environment?

I was interested in the School of the Environment because I wanted to study the intersections between environmentalism and architecture, specifically how we move towards making our built environment sustainable.

What is your favourite memory from your time with the School?

My favorite memory from my time at the School of the Environment was during one of my first tutorials for an environmental class where we were told to go outside and from a specific point study the nature around us. It was interesting to take a moment and see how much movement from animals there was in the middle of campus.
What have you learned about yourself through the program?

I have learned about my ecological footprint in about three classes! I have also learned from my major in environmental studies that for me sustainability isn't enough, eco-justice is both necessary and really interesting from a design perspective. Prior to doing the environmental studies major I didn't know that sustainability wasn't white and black and now I'm writing essays arguing that the Green New Deal won't be successful if it just adds new jobs in renewable energy it needs to ensure protections for the working people and the land. A more dynamic view of sustainability is both engaging and necessary in the present climate.

Do you have any advice for incoming students?

To incoming students I would say make sure to take care of yourself. University is a time where we are learning to do things on our own and for a lot of people (myself included) stress can highlight existing medical issues. It is so important to connect with health care providers and university staff to make sure you are getting what you need early on. It can make your time in school more manageable and more enjoyable. And this isn't just for people who have an injury or a chronic condition, school is stressful! Find your closest cat cafe (Toronto even has a dog cafe) and go de-stress once in a while.

What are your plans upon graduation?

My plans after graduation were to take two years off from school and use them to work and travel. After that I aim to do my Masters in Urban Planning with a focus on sustainability and equity.
How have you been affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic? What are your thoughts about the future?

I was in the job application process when COVID-19 hit and I was making progress. However, now I'm on unemployment and continue to work on job applications, but I am waiting to submit them until things relax a bit. The future was already uncertain with graduation before this and now that has increased. There is also a lot of grief around the things we are missing - graduation with our families, summer with friends who might never live in the same city again. It's uncertain which is scary, but I have been trying to remember the things that aren't lost from this and are still to come.