

SYNERGIES: Cross-Disciplinary Colloquium on Design

Post-Event Report by Simon Leroux

Objective & Outcome

On November 21st, 2019, a first dialogue was initiated targeting complex problems between the Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation and University of Waterloo's School of Architecture. Graduate students from a diverse range of academic backgrounds gathered at the Cambridge campus to share related thesis topics through both formal and informal activities.

The event began with a graduate research colloquium, where students from the University of Waterloo and Balsillie School of International Affairs presented thesis work, followed by moderated discussions. The panels were presented as follows:

1. Land-use and ecologies — Moderated by Jane Hutton, Assistant Professor and Graduate Officer

Hannah Spasov — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

A Reimagination of the Ontario Lodge: The family-run lodge as an alternative model to the contemporary cottage through the design of communal spaces and shared environmental stewardship

Anita Lazaruko — PhD Candidate, Environment

Water resource management under conditions of deep uncertainty: Exploratory Future Scenarios for Adaptation, Transformation and Resilience

Adrienne Mason — MSc Candidate, Environment

Art as an Interface for Watershed System Resiliency

Heba Alzaben — PhD Candidate, Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering

Investigating the exergy destruction principle applied to precision agriculture using thermal remote sensing

James Clarke-Hicks — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

SELL TO SAVE: Examining the Perpetuation of the North-South divide through Carbon Sinks

2. Narrative and System Re-Design — Moderated by Adrian Blackwell, Associate Professor

Kelsey Malott — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

An Homage to a Generation

Wayne Yan — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

The Value of Sacred Space

Ilhan Ozdemir — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

Anatolian Regional Modernism: A Study of Architectural Tradition in Search of a New Critical Regional Modernism in Anatolia

Alice Huang — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

Site specific data to insights: digital tool and framework for navigating architectural data landscape

Leo Liu — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

Dynamic Visualizations: Developing a Framework for Crowd-Based Simulation

3. Humanizing Design — Moderated by Philip Beesley, Professor

Jonathan Hui, PhD International Affairs

Return of the Empires: China and the US as world ecologies

Lilian Camacho, pursuing a PhD in Environment

Exploring the role of local intermediaries in sustainability transformations in the Canadian fashion industry

Jasdeep Multani — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

The 5 Senses - Designing for the Autistic Spectrum through Sensorial Reduction and Heightening

Maighdlyn Hadley — M. Arch Candidate, Architecture

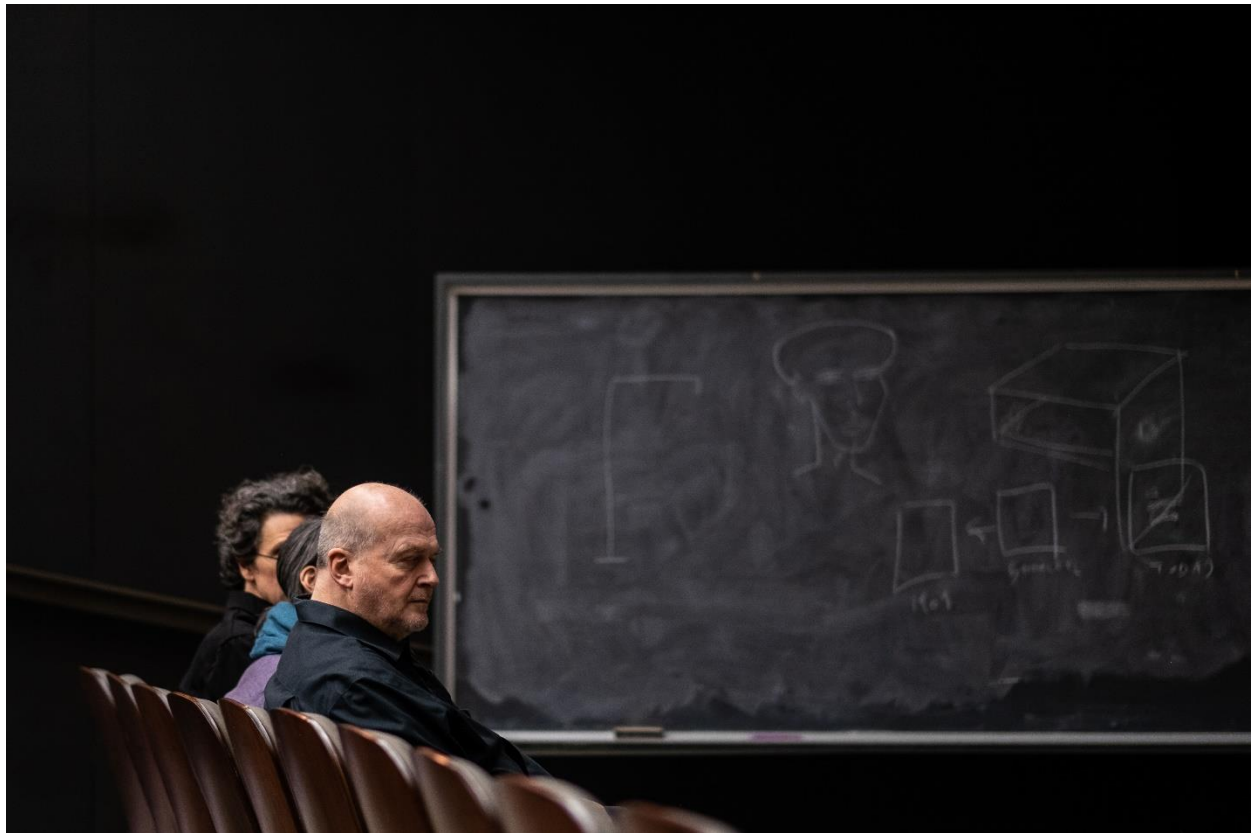
Hurry up and Wait: A spatial proposal for urban stress relief

Following the colloquium, a mixer was held in the school's loft area, where food and casual conversations were had alongside showcased undergraduate and graduate projects.

Participation

This 2-part event was fortunate to accommodate over 60 attendants, which included a range of faculty members, graduate and undergraduate students from Environment, Engineering, International Affairs, and Architecture.

Event Photos (Below)













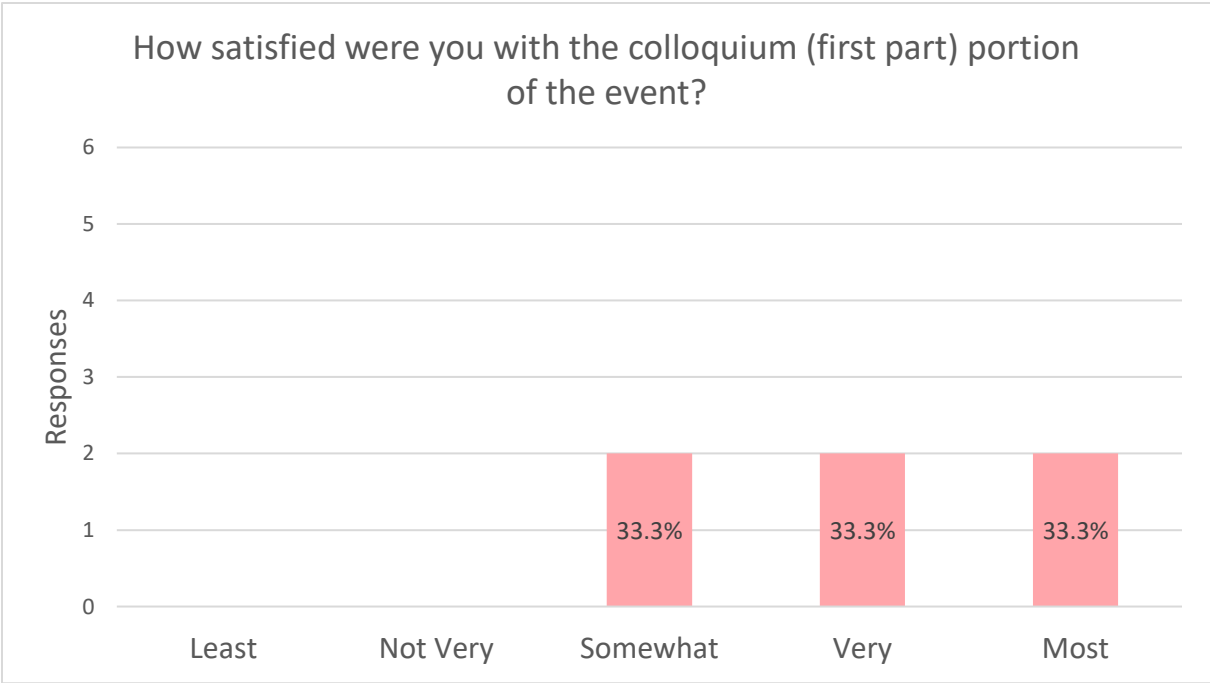
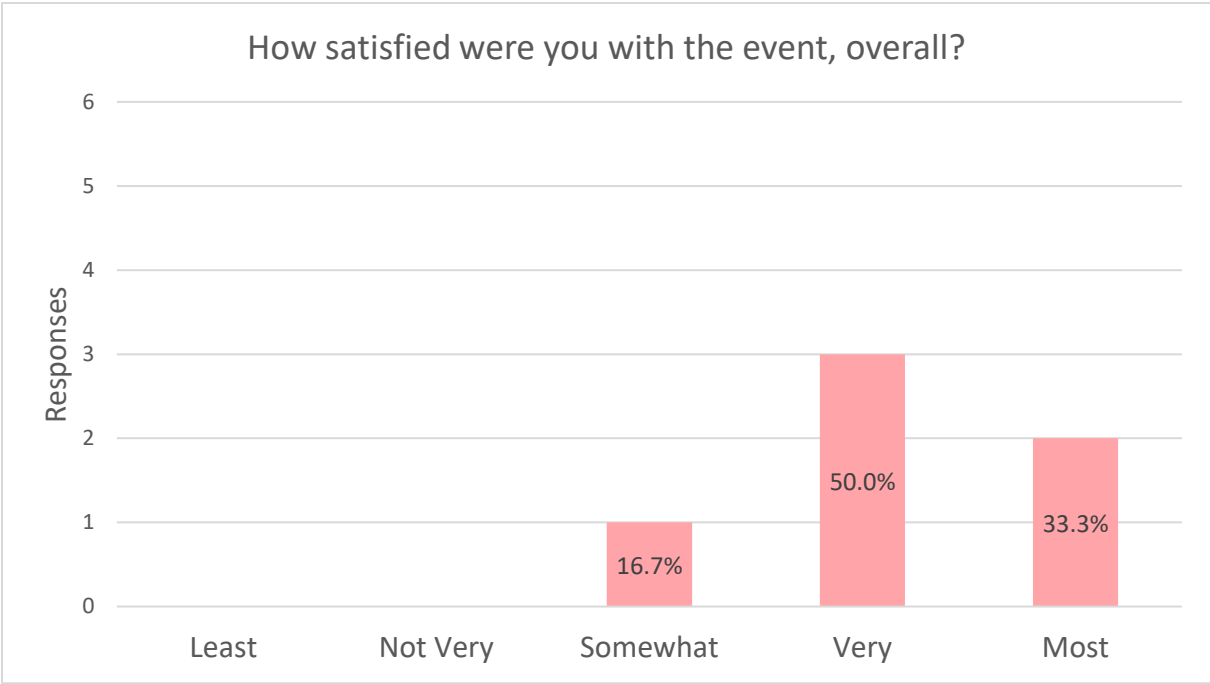


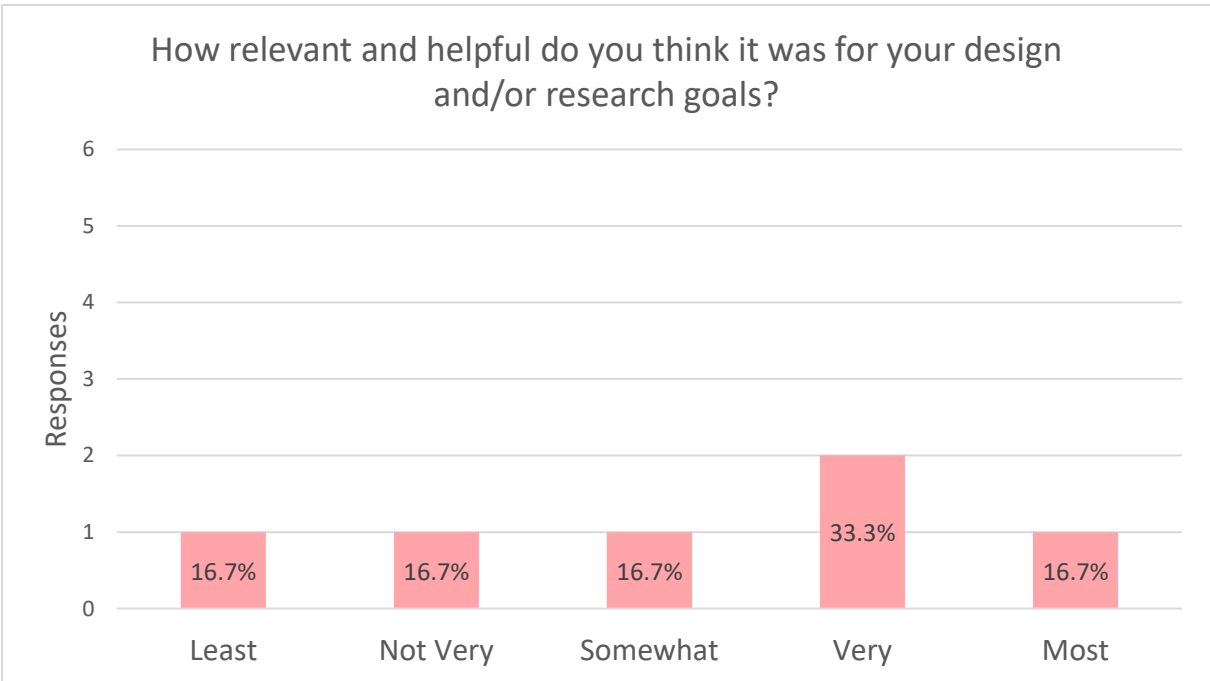
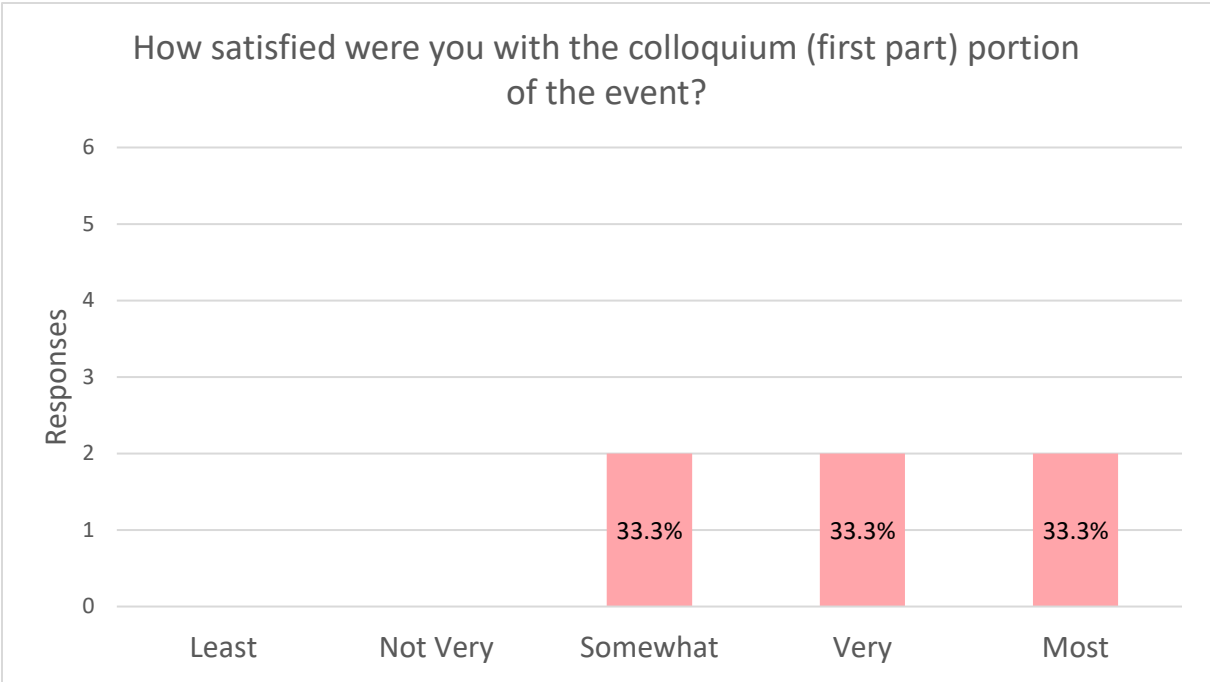






Participant Survey Results

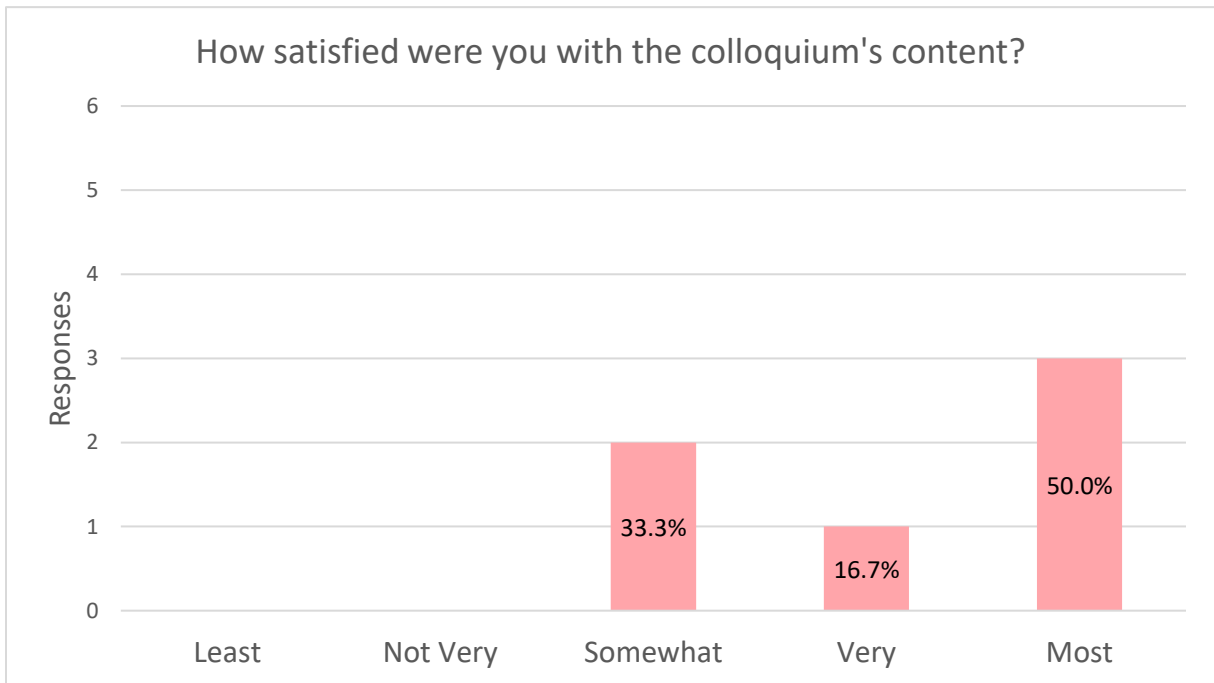




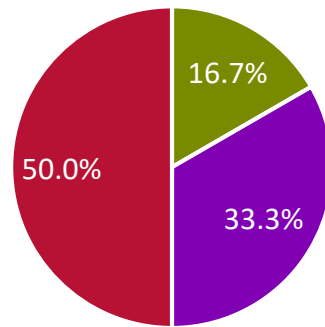
How relevant and helpful do you think it was for your professional goals?



How satisfied were you with the colloquium's content?



Which discussion panel did you find most interesting?

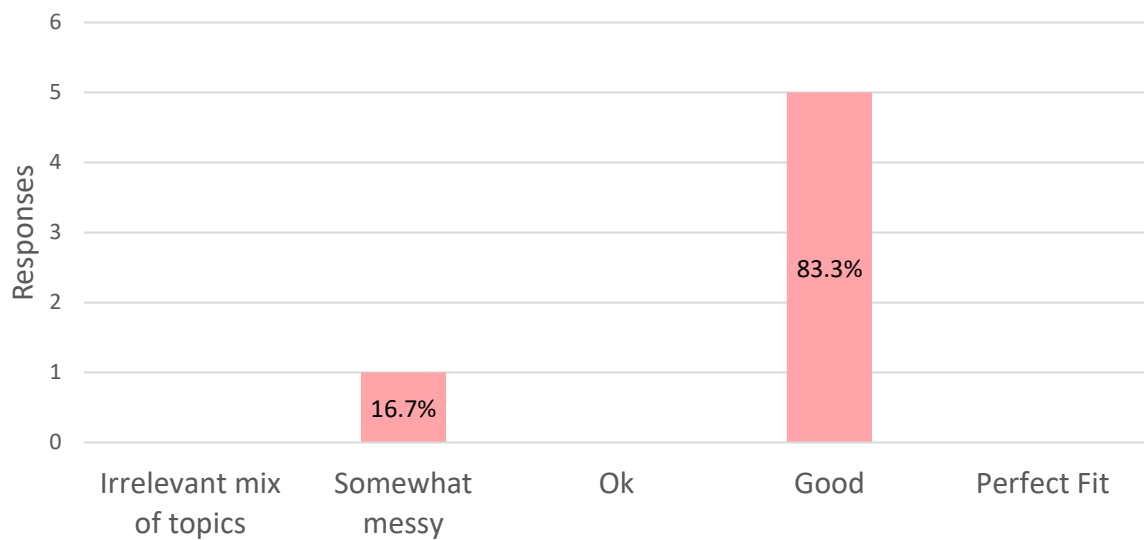


- Panel 1 - Land Use and Ecologies
- Panel 2 - Narrative and System Redesign
- Panel 3 - Humanizing Design

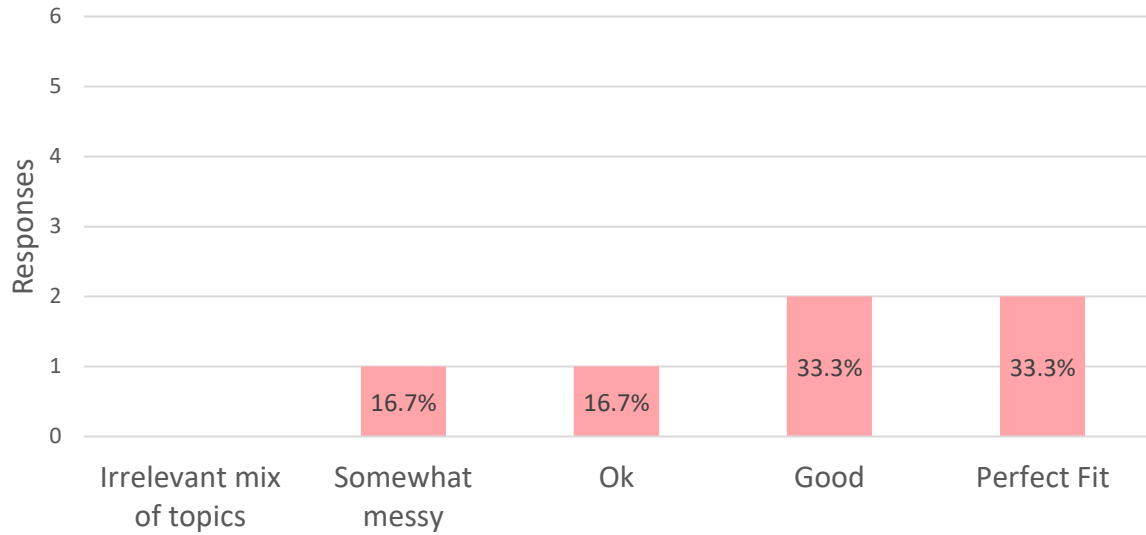
Q: Is there anything in particular that stood out as interesting?

A: (1) Topic [Panel 3 – Humanizing Design] relevant to my research.

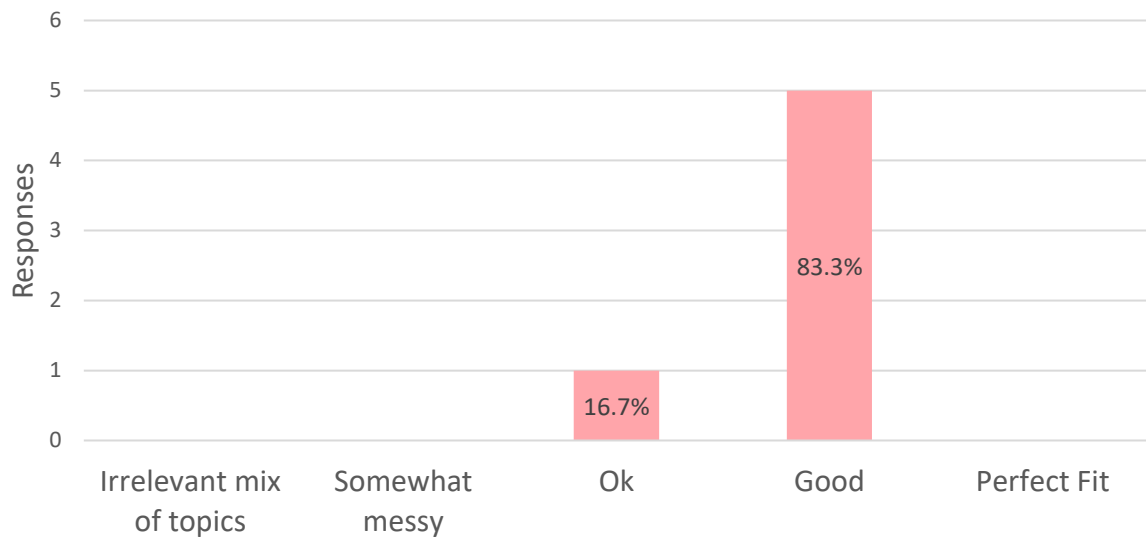
How would you rate the speaker/topic setup in each of the discussion panels? [Panel 1 - Land Use and Ecologies]



How would you rate the speaker/topic setup in each of the discussion panels? [Panel 2 - Narrative and System Redesign]



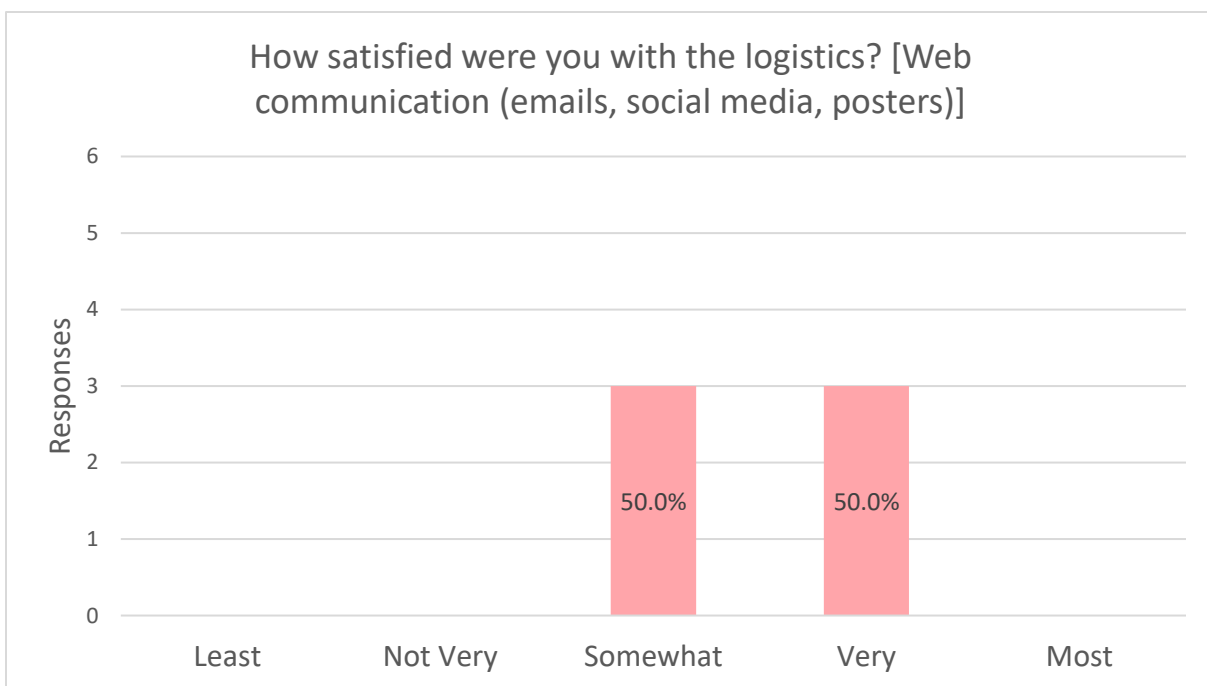
How would you rate the speaker/topic setup in each of the discussion panels? [Panel 3 - Humanizing Design]

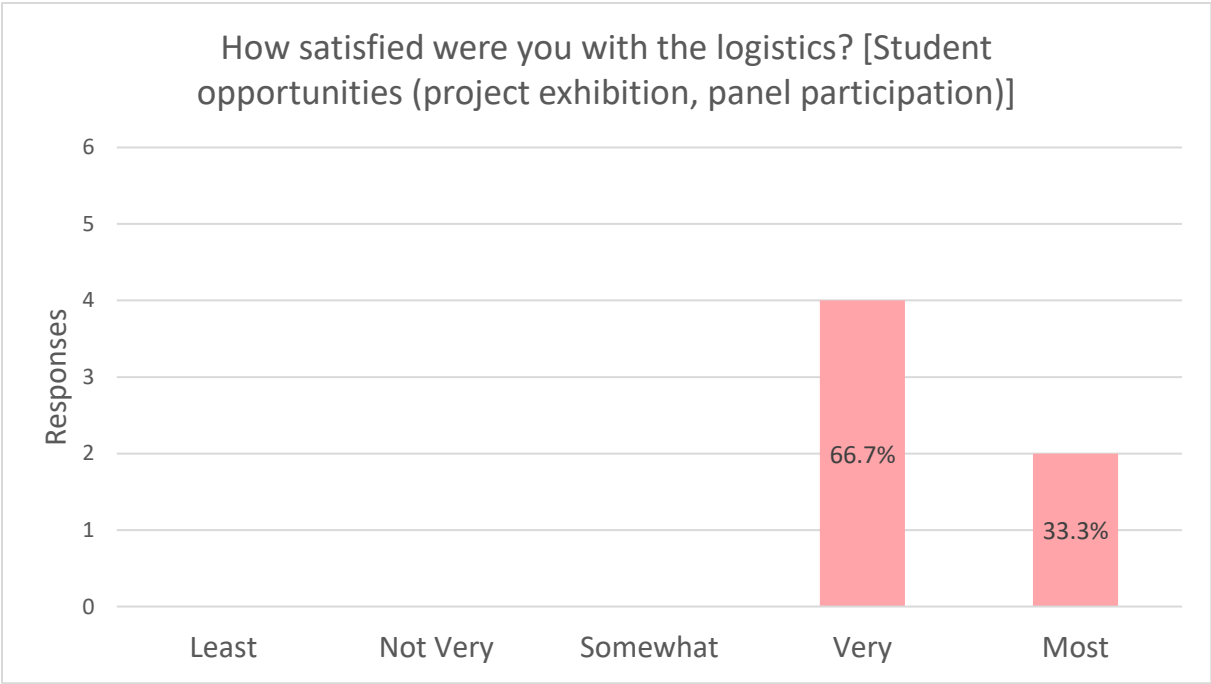
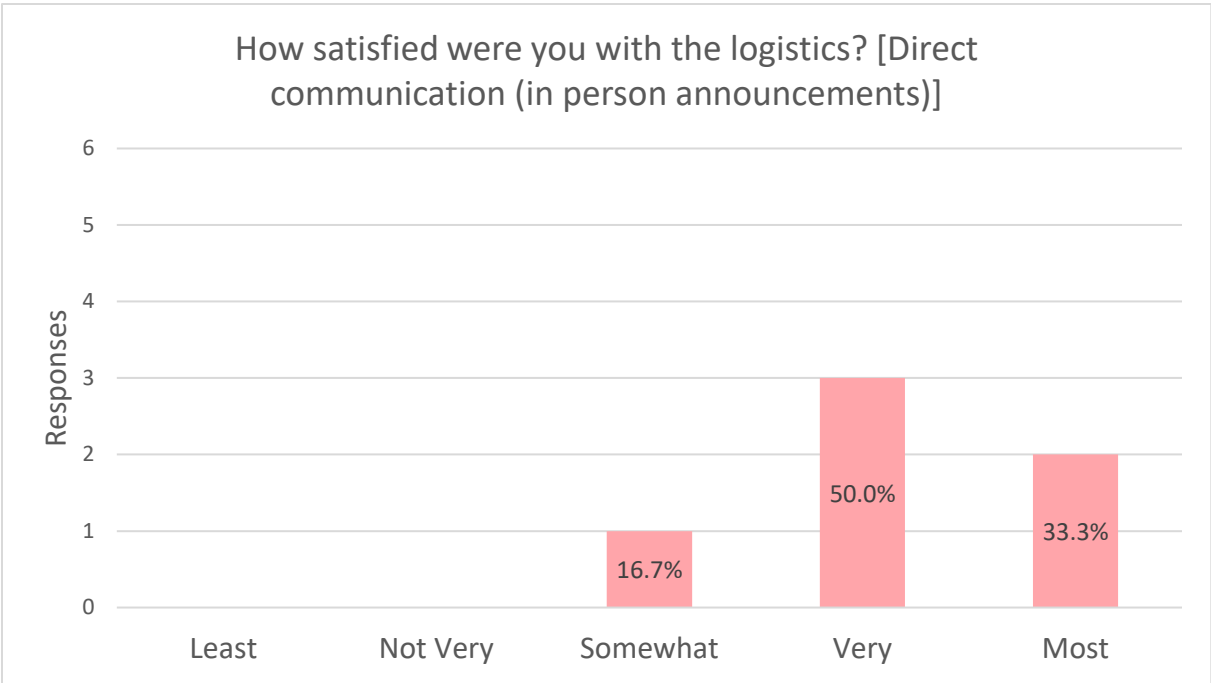


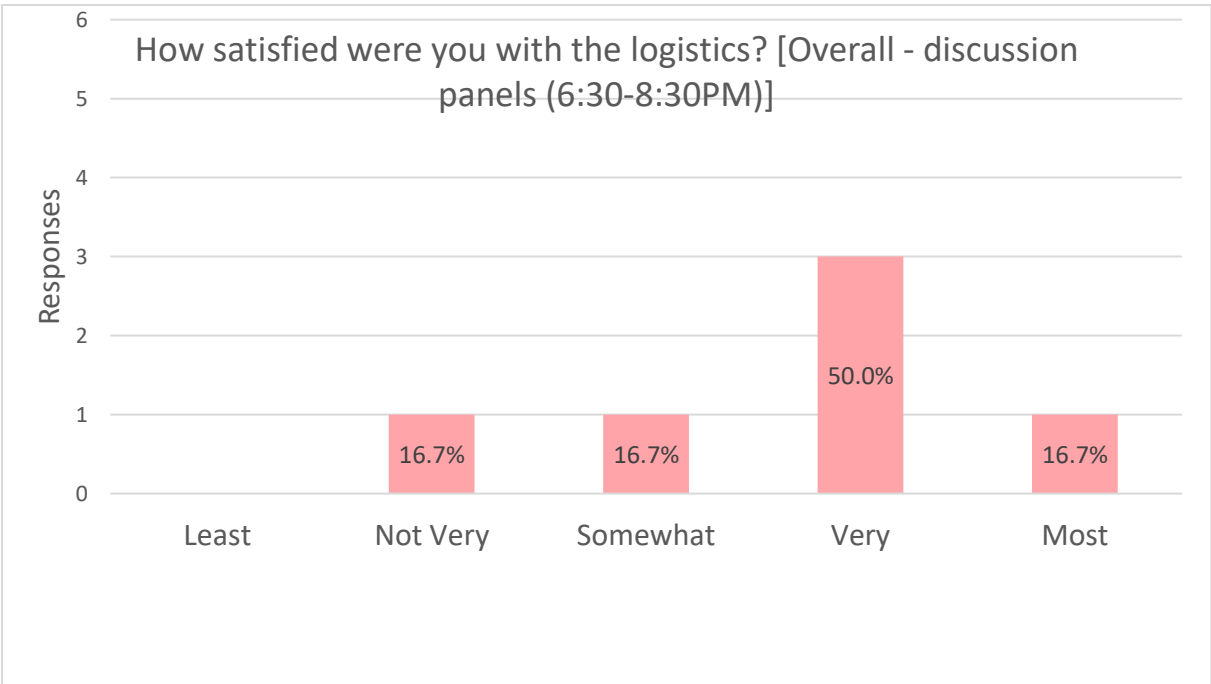
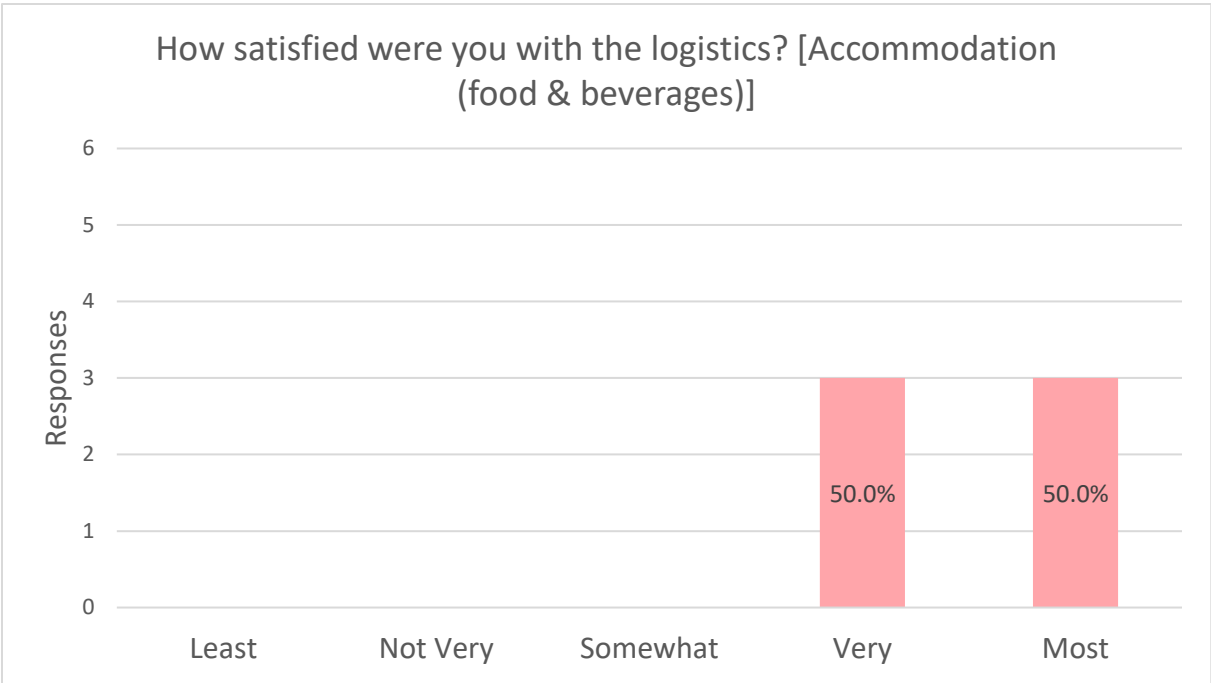
Q: Do you have any suggestions for improving the formal discussion panels?

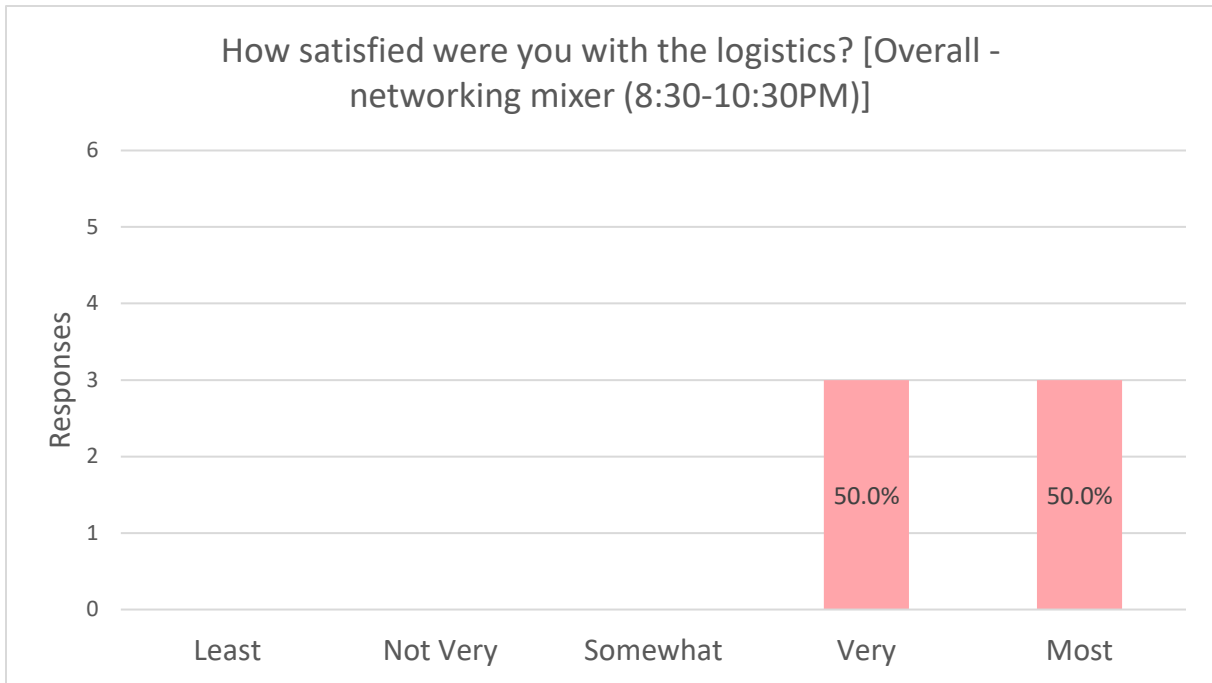
A: (1) Panel 2 didn't have a clear direction. Would be interesting to bring in profs from outside of architecture.

(2) For a group of speakers with very diverse topics, it may be useful to ask all speakers to address a common question in their presentations, such as "how can your work inform design". It may also help if panel moderators had questions like these ready beforehand, based on the abstracts submitted.









Q: What did you like most about the event?

A: (1) The bridge between many disciplines

(2) I enjoyed the interdisciplinary approaches that many researchers took to tackle complex problems

(3) Networking mixer was much needed when students are working on projects individually in masters.

(4) Diversity of topics; opportunity to meet researchers and learn about the work in the School of Architecture.

Q: What could have been done better or differently? Was there anything that you found to be unnecessary?

A: (1) I thought that everything was well done!

(2) Would be ideal to have the even either right after midterms of TRD1 or beginning of other terms to update everyone on what they are working on in their thesis. Panels would be more helpful during M2-M3 as thesis topics are more developed. Possibly reduce number of students per panel and increase time for presentation.

(3) I'd suggest having a compost/recycling bin next to the coffee station and adding signs with directions to the restrooms. I would also recommend publishing the event agenda as soon as it is available.

Q: What were your key take-aways from this event?

A: Humanizing design in the built and 'natural' landscape is essential and working across disciplines is an important method for achieving this.

Q: Any overall feedback for the event?

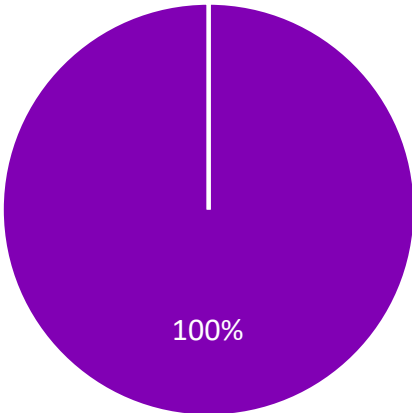
A: (1) Really good

(2) Great work organizing an excellent event that covered a diverse range of projects focusing on elements of complexity

(3) A much needed direction in the school.

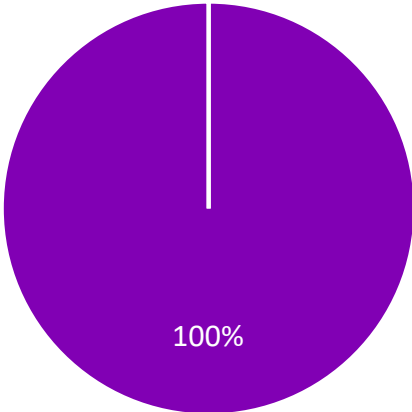
(4) I hope this event becomes a tradition.

Would you recommend this event to a friend?

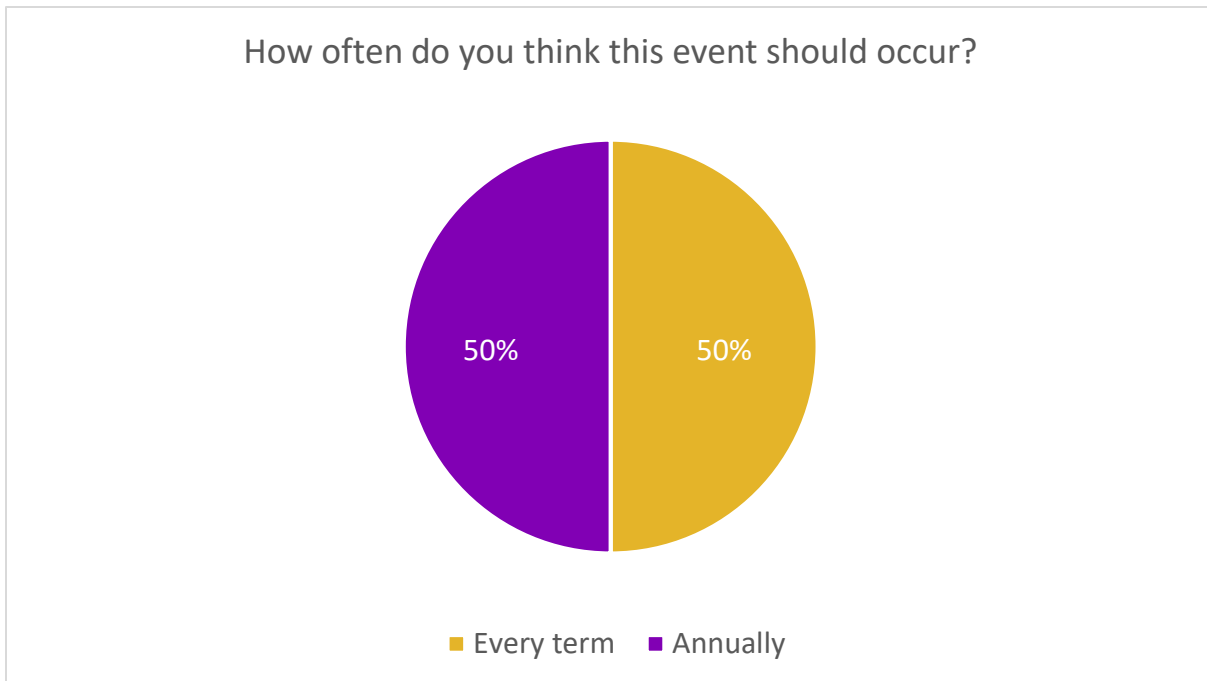


■ Yes ■ No

Would you consider attending a similar event in the future?



■ Yes ■ No



Future Opportunities

Since the colloquium, there have been ongoing efforts from various parties to foster stronger links across disciplines. Two Waterloo-Cambridge campus socials have been organized by the Graduate Students Association, namely “Cambridge GSA visits the Graduate House” on November 29th, 2019 and “Cambridge goes to Winter Blast: Grad Student Party” on January 31st, 2020.

Regarding research opportunities, more cross-campus activities are on the horizon as the student body in Architectural Engineering grows and with the potential future expansion of the Cambridge campus. Closer engagement with multidisciplinary initiatives such as the Collaborative Water Program and Certificate in Structural Engineering could also bring new and exciting academic projects to fruition.

The Synergies colloquium was organized by the Design chapter of Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation, WICI: Design. Due to changing cohorts following the Winter term, the branch is currently seeking new leadership. If you are interested in leading actions to promote complexity science through interdisciplinary research and design at UW, please reach out to Simon Leroux (s2leroux@uwaterloo.ca).

WICI: Design Team

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All photography courtesy of Dhroov Patel.