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Soundwalking

Andra McCartney

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Interviewer: Alex Arsenault

Andra McCartney is Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Concordia University, where she teaches Sound in Media. She is a sound artist whose most recent research project, [Soundwalking Interactions](#) (funded by FQRSC), investigates the listening experiences of people on soundwalks and listening to [artworks](#) made from soundwalks.

What does mobilities mean to you?

It really means a lot because I associate mobility with transportation initially and questions of accessibility. Mobilities is an interesting term because it makes you think about the different ways of being mobile and the different technologies of dealing with mobility and the different ways that people are mobile in different situations. And, also, the possibilities for mobility of different places. So mobilities really has many different dimensions, I think.

How do you use mobilities in your research?

It's fundamental to my research because I do soundwalks. There's an assumption there that people will walk, for instance. And the question of accessibility comes up because when we're doing soundwalks we want to make them in places that are accessible to people through transit, so participants can get to where the soundwalk actually is. And that they are accessible to people in different kinds of conveyances too, so that people with strollers can go on walks and people in wheelchairs can go on walks. We're always

thinking about those things when we're planning walks. We're thinking about what area they might be in, or how accessible that area is to people. And then beyond that, I think the whole idea of soundwalking is associated with longstanding ideas about walking and thinking, and the relationship between moving and thinking, and how it changes our ways of thinking about place, in particular. And, how moving through a place can be used to create stories about that place. So often, the process of doing a soundwalk is thinking about a place in narrative terms and that is associated with moving through the place.