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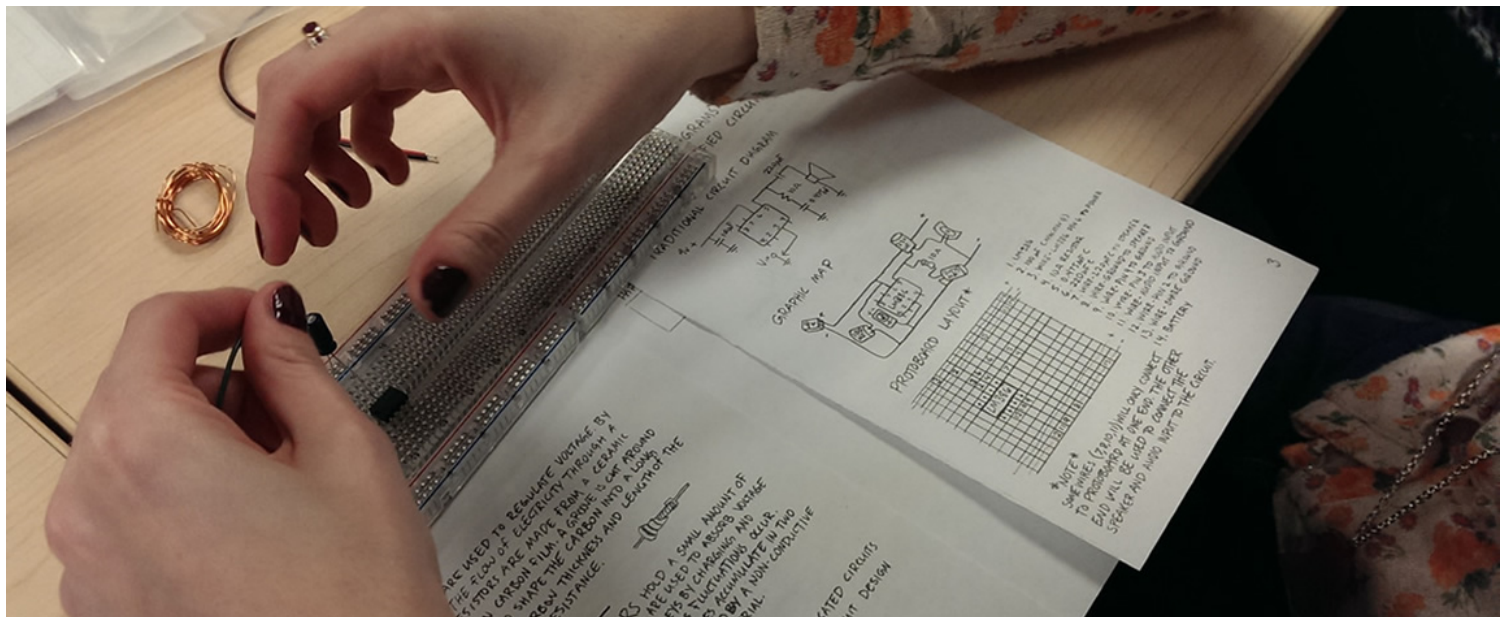
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Kits for Cultural History

<http://maker.uvic.ca/ty/bemmade/>

<http://fitzake>

Nina Belojevic (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic/>) • on September 20, 2014 • [KitsForCulture](http://maker.uvic.ca/category/kits/)



Supported by a four-year [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\) Insight Grant](http://maker.uvic.ca/insight/), the Kits for Cultural History project is led by Jentery Sayers (the MLab's PI) and [William J. Turkel](http://williamjturkel.net/) (Western University). The primary aim of the project is to express the histories of media, technologies, and science through new media, especially [physical computing](http://maker.uvic.ca/physcomp/) and [digital fabrication](http://maker.uvic.ca/fab/) techniques. Since September 2013, a group of MLab researchers has been prototyping, designing, and producing a series of physical kits, which “remake” [old technologies and media](http://maker.uvic.ca/aesthetics/) that have been largely ignored, no longer exist, or are difficult to access. Rather than communicating humanities research solely in a written format, these open-source kits encourage [exploratory engagements](http://maker.uvic.ca/kit2/) that playfully [resist instrumentalism as well as determinism](http://maker.uvic.ca/determinism/). In doing so, they [prompt audiences](http://maker.uvic.ca/kit1/) to consider how the material particulars of historical mechanisms are [embedded in culture](http://maker.uvic.ca/cases/), without assuming that, in the present, we can ever experience the world like “they did back then.”



- Photograph of the Early Wearables Kit, care of Danielle Morgan

Research Leads, Contributors, Support, and Partnerships

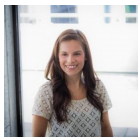
Kits for Cultural History is supported by the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/) (<http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/>). Jentery Sayers and William J. Turkel are the project's principal investigators. With Sayers and Turkel, [Nina Belojevic](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic/>), [Nicole Clouston](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nicole/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nicole/>), [Shaun Macpherson](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/shaun/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/shaun/>), and [Katie McQueston](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/katiem/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/katiem/>), together with [Teddie Brock](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/teddie/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/teddie/>), [Tiffany Chan](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/>), [Alex Christie](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/alex/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/alex/>), [Laura Dosky](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/laura/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/laura/>), [Devon Elliott](http://devonelliott.net/) (<http://devonelliott.net/>), [Katherine Goertz](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/kat/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/kat/>), [Jon Johnson](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/jonjohnson/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/jonjohnson/>), [Danielle Morgan](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/danielle/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/danielle/>), [Victoria Murawski](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/victoria/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/victoria/>), and [Zaqir Virani](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/zaqir/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/zaqir/>), have contributed to the project. The research is being conducted in the MLab in partnership with the [Lab for Humanistic Fabrication](http://williamjturkel.net/2013/02/02/the-history-department-with-a-fab-lab/) (<http://williamjturkel.net/2013/02/02/the-history-department-with-a-fab-lab/>) at Western University. The researchers are based in departments of English, history, and visual arts, as well as the Cultural, Social, and Political Thought program at UVic.

Project Status

This project is ongoing, with substantial support through at least April 2017. During the 2013-14 academic year, early prototypes were developed for three different kits: an [early wearables kit](http://maker.uvic.ca/debut/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/debut/>) (on late 19th-century electric jewellery by Gustave Trouvé), an [early video games kit](http://maker.uvic.ca/tennis/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/tennis/>) (on William Higinbotham's *Tennis for Two*), and an early wire recorder kit. During 2014-15, the team expanded development of the [early wearables kit](https://github.com/uvicmakerlab/earlyWearablesKit) (<https://github.com/uvicmakerlab/earlyWearablesKit>), producing replicas of Trouvé's electric jewellery, modelling and manufacturing cases for the kit, gathering contextual materials, and articulating the kit's scholarly apparatus. In 2015-16, the team completed and exhibited its [early magnetic recording kit](https://github.com/uvicmakerlab/magneticRecordingKit) (<https://github.com/uvicmakerlab/magneticRecordingKit>) and also began developing its [early optophonics kit](https://github.com/uvicmakerlab/optophoneKit) (<https://github.com/uvicmakerlab/optophoneKit>). By 2018, the MLab will circulate a number of these open-source kits, which will be archived, peer-reviewed, and distributed online and by post. Several publications, including "Prototyping the Past" (<http://visiblelanguagejournal.com/issue/172/article/1232>) (*Visible Language*), "Kits for Cultural History, or Fluxkits for Scholarly Communication" (<http://hyperrhiz.io/hyperrhiz13/workshops-kits/early-wearables-essay.html>) (*Hyperrhiz*), and "Why Fabricate?" (<http://src-online.ca/index.php/src/article/view/209/428>) (*SRC*), have already emerged from the project.

To stay in the loop with the Kits for Cultural History, follow the stream of posts below. We do our best to regularly publish logs of our work, and we are currently presenting this research at universities and conferences. Please do not hesitate to either comment on a log or email maker@uvic.ca (<mailto:maker@uvic.ca>) with suggestions.

Post by [Nina Belojevic](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic/>), attached to the [KitsForCulture](http://maker.uvic.ca/category/kits/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/category/kits/>) project, with the [projects](http://maker.uvic.ca/tag/project/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/tag/project/>) tag. Images in this post care of Nina Belojevic, Shaun Macpherson, and Jentery Sayers. (This post was updated on 16 October 2016.)



<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic>

More about [Nina Belojevic \(http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/nbelojevic)

Assistant Director, Maker Lab



[Research Reel: Remaking the Past \(http://maker.uvic.ca/reel/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/reel/)

by [Teddie Brock \(http://maker.uvic.ca/author/teddie/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/teddie/) on March 26, 2017

Tiffany, Kat, Danielle, Victoria, and I recently made a video for UVic's Research Reels event. It's titled "Kits for Cultural History: Remaking the Pa[...]"



[MLab Vid Short-Listed for Research Award \(http://maker.uvic.ca/reels/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/reels/)

by [Jentery Savers \(http://maker.uvic.ca/author/admin/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/admin/) on March 5, 2017

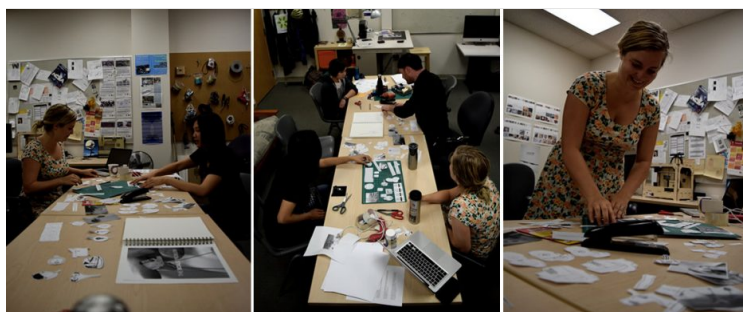
Congrats to Teddie, Tiffany, Kat, Danielle, and Victoria, who made a video that has been short-listed for UVic's Research Reels award. All short-liste[...]



[Histories of Digital Labour: Early OCR \(http://maker.uvic.ca/mla2017/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/mla2017/)

by [Tiffany Chan \(http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/) on January 7, 2017

Jentery and I just returned from giving a talk at the 2017 Modern Language Convention in Philadelphia. It was titled, "Early Histories of OCR (Optical[...]"



[Illustrated Guide to Prototyping the Past \(http://maker.uvic.ca/ptp/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/ptp/)

by [Danielle Morgan \(http://maker.uvic.ca/author/danielle/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/danielle/) on November 25, 2016

In August 2016, the MLab began work on An Illustrated Guide to Prototyping the Past, which, instead of acting as a how-to manual, outlines the problem[...]



[The Reading Optophone Kit \(http://maker.uvic.ca/rokit/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/rokit/)

by [Tiffany Chan \(http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/\)](http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/) on November 23, 2016

In November 2015, the MLab began work on remaking a reading optophone as the third volume in the Kits for Cultural History series. The optophone was a[...]



[MLab in Interactions](http://maker.uvic.ca/interactions/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/interactions/>)

by Tiffany Chan (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/>) on November 21, 2016

The MLab is featured in the latest (Nov-Dec 2016) issue of ACM Interactions, a bimonthly publication about design and human-computer interaction. Ther[...]



[The Early Magnetic Recording Kit](http://maker.uvic.ca/emrkit/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/emrkit/>)

by Danielle Morgan (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/danielle/>) on October 27, 2016

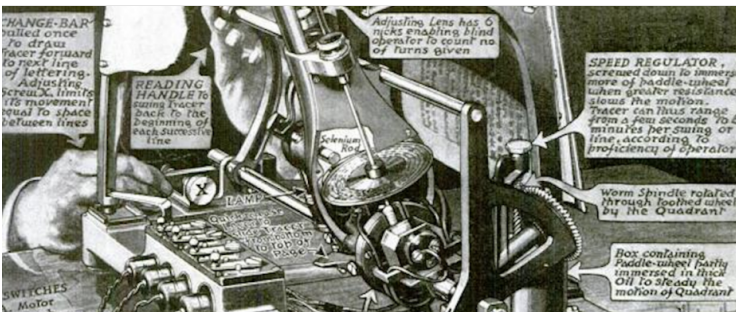
The second volume in the Kits for Cultural History series, the Early Magnetic Recording Kit prompts people to re-perform what many claim was the first[...]



[The Early Wearables Kit](http://maker.uvic.ca/ewkit/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/ewkit/>)

by Katherine Goertz (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/kat/>) on October 26, 2016

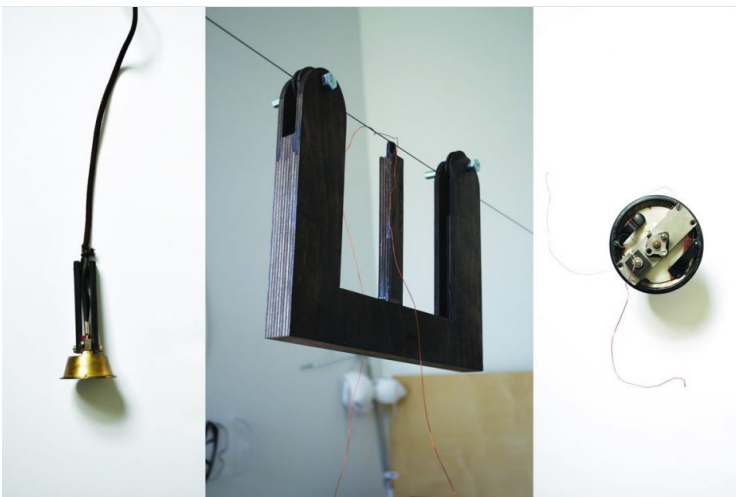
The first volume in the Kits for Cultural History series, the Early Wearables Kit prompts people to reverse engineer and reassemble an electro-mobile [...]



[Designing for Difficulty](http://maker.uvic.ca/diff/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/diff/>)

by Tiffany Chan (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/tiffany/>) on July 31, 2016

In July, I gave a talk on prototyping and remaking old technologies at DH2016 in Kraków, Poland. In that talk, titled "Designing for Difficulty," I ar[...]



[Demanufacturing as Inquiry](http://maker.uvic.ca/demanufacture/) (<http://maker.uvic.ca/demanufacture/>)

by Katherine Goertz (<http://maker.uvic.ca/author/kat/>) on July 31, 2016

During and after our "Jacob: Recording on Wire" exhibit at the Audain Gallery in June, several people asked us how we remade Valdemar Poulsen's early [...]

MLab in the Humanities

MLab on Campus

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MLab Research



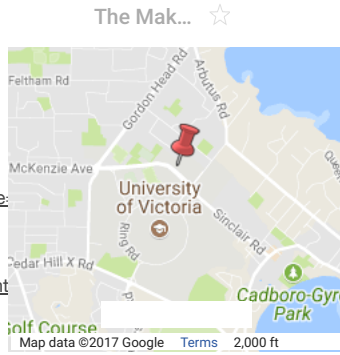
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PI + Director: [Jentery Sayers](http://english.uvic.ca/people/jentery_sayers.htm)
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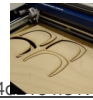
[Prototyping Sounds at MLab](http://maker.uvic.ca/sounds/fabrication)
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[Julie Thompson Klein to Visit UVic](http://maker.uvic.ca/klein/)
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