

**ARLIS/NA + VRA 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Conference 2016 | Seattle**  
**Poster Session**

**Artists' Book Contest: Connecting with Students and Building a More Diverse Collection** — *Claudia Covert*, Special Collections Librarian, Rhode Island School of Design

During the Spring 2015 semester, the Fleet Library at RISD had our first Artists' Book Contest. I started as Special Collections Librarian in July 2014 and began talking with Archives and Special Collections Staff about what they would like to do. It was expressed that we do many classes on Artists' Books, but how do we build upon those relationships? It was also felt our Artists' Book Collection could be more diverse. These talks led us to launch our 1st Annual Student Artists' Book Juried Contest and Exhibition. We offered purchase prizes to the winners who were selected by three jurors. These books were added to our collection. This allowed us to connect with the students from across disciplines and for students to see their work together. It also helped our collection become more representative of the diversity of our student body. Students from a variety of departments, from undergraduate and graduate, entered 43 pieces. The entries ranged from zines to altered books to handmade books and beyond. Student feedback was filled with thank you's for acknowledging the book arts work done at RISD. And they asked us to do it again. So we just called for entries for the second contest. This poster will illustrate what we learned from the first contest and how we are doing it the second time around, from fundraising to online exhibits. For more information about the contest please see: [risd.libguides.com/contest](http://risd.libguides.com/contest).