



## TuftsPUBLIC Jenny Polak: ICE Escape Signs at Tufts University

### LOCATIONS

**Aidekman Arts Center / Medford**  
Media Wall

**SMFA at Tufts / Boston**  
Weems Atrium

### CONTACT

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Medford, MA — For the 2019/2020 year, Tufts University Art Galleries will be commissioning the artist Jenny Polak to produce an edition of her decentered public art project *ICE Escape Signs*. This ongoing series based on fire-escape signs, and sited like the real signs, using site-specific floor-plans of buildings and are made using typical sign-making processes. Originating as a project during the George W. Bush administration the signs draw attention to the fact that people are living in daily fear of being caught in a raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Working with Tufts University students to conceptualize the signage for the campus, they will be sited at the SMFA at Tufts building at 230 Fenway and at the Aidekman Arts Center Media Wall. The project is accompanied by a website at [www.escapesigntufts.com](http://www.escapesigntufts.com).

Tufts University Art Gallery is commissioning this project as part of Tufts PUBLIC, an ongoing program of yearlong, temporary public art projects



designed for spaces outside the Art Galleries and throughout the school's Medford/Somerville and Boston campuses to be on view for an academic year. *ICE Escape Signs at Tufts University* is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System*, which will be on view at Tufts University Art Galleries in Spring 2020. This exhibition features work by artists from across the nation that addresses the criminal justice system, mass incarceration, and the prison-industrial complex and is traveling from the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. *ICE Escape Signs* have appeared at multiple venues including Contemporary Art Museum Houston; The Soap Factory, Minneapolis, MN; NJIT School of Architecture, Newark, NJ; Tompkins County Public Library, Ithaca, NY; Seven Hills Conference Center, CA; Queens Central Library Gallery, Jamaica, NY; White Box Gallery, NY; Copenhagen Central Library, Denmark.



Jenny Polak makes site and community responsive art that reframes immigrant-citizen relations, amplifying demands for social justice. Originally from England, her art draws on her background in architecture and includes public and socially engaged projects, such as architectural installations, drawings, and useful commemorative objects. Polak's family history of migration drives her to examine detention centers, racial profiling, and strategies for surviving hostile authorities. Her fictional firm Design For The Alien Within creates hypothetical hiding and dwelling places, symbolic lookout, and counter-surveillance structures.

*ICE Escape Signs at Tufts University* is organized by Abigail Satinsky, Curator.

## ABOUT TUFTS UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES

Housed within a research university and an art school, the Tufts University Art Galleries engage with artists, scholars, and works of art to provoke discourse around cultural and social contexts. Through exhibitions, programming, research, and collecting, we create a pedagogical platform for the Tufts community and wider publics.

Tufts University Art Galleries operates from two main gallery locations:

### **Aidekman Arts Center / Medford**

40 Talbot Avenue  
Tuesday—Sunday, 11AM-5PM  
Closed Mondays and university holidays

### **SMFA at Tufts / Boston**

230 Fenway  
Monday—Saturday, 10AM-5PM  
Closed Sundays and university holidays

FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC

**[artgalleries.tufts.edu](http://artgalleries.tufts.edu)**

Images: All Jenny Polak, *ICE Escape Sign: Hammer Museum*, UCLA Graphite magazine; *ICE Escape Sign: CAM Houston*, 2018. Digital print face-mounted on Plexiglass; *ICE Escape Sign: Kings County Hospital*, 2019. Part of (after)Care with No Longer Empty Curatorial Lab

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