

*First Descendant: Sterile Hybridity*

48 x 36 inches

Woodblock Print

2019

*First Descendant: Sterile Hybridity* is informed by my experience growing up as the first generation of my mother's family denied enrollment in the Crow tribe due to the current blood quantum requirement and prohibition of dual tribal enrollment. Apsáalooke is our word for ourselves, it means "children of the large-beaked bird" which was interpreted to mean Crow. The birds featured in this print articulate an emotional state which I have frequently encountered through navigating my cultural identity. My mixed race means that I don't meet the federally recognized definition of a Crow citizen by the tribe's current standards, but I have participated in traditions and been socially and medically categorized as Indigenous since childhood. The mule in the bottom of the piece speaks to an implication of my tribal status which weighs heavily on my mind. A mix of two animals, mules are genetically unable to produce offspring. The mule is depicted with an empty womb, because while I am granted First Descendant status by the Crow tribe, were I to have children with someone outside of the tribe or with a lower Degree of Indian Blood (Blood Quantum) than I have, they would no longer be considered Crow under our current policy. Additionally, I included the mule because many of my relatives have the last name Yellowmule (likely referencing a mule deer), but as a young child I pictured this type of mule in my mind and have grown to associate myself with the creature. The shapes in the background represent elk teeth, which are important to the Apsáalooke and feel nostalgic to me because my mother used them to make dresses for me to wear to powwows growing up.

This piece has been acquired to permanent collections at:

- The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC
- The Institute of American Indian Arts Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, NM
- The Montana Museum of Art and Culture, Missoula, MT