

## Wendy Red Star

CUE ART FOUNDATION

137 W 25th Street, Ground Floor

June 1–July 13

In previous photographs, Wendy Red Star has posed amid inflatable elk, creased mountain backdrops, and AstroTurf to lampoon the manufactured authenticity of indigenous culture evident in, say, an Edward S. Curtis postcard. That ironic approach is traded for a more genuine one in *Um-basax-bilua*, “*Where They Make the Noise*” 1904–2016, 2017, a photographic timeline of Montana’s yearly Crow Fair—a parade originally installed by the US government in 1904 to assimilate the Apsáalooke into white culture—that spans two rooms and a century in its depiction of Crow customs. A cavalcade of tribe members makes its way across the walls, each figure cut and pasted to literalize the passage of time. The procession wends through the gallery in reverse-chronological order, so that selfies and Chevys ebb into colorized pictures, then crumbly black and white. Corraling family snapshots, back issues of *National Geographic*, stock imagery, and more, the timeline is democratic with source material, so that a beadwork session graced with a Getty Images watermark shares space with a cut-out of the artist as a smiling adolescent, holding up a can of Orange Crush. Extensive marginalia, scrawled onto the wall in pencil, decrypts Red Star’s genealogy, often straying to more playful facts. We learn that Curley, a Crow scout in the US Army, aided General Custer during the Battle of Little Bighorn; that Safeway cornflakes make an agreeable camp breakfast; and of entrepreneur Max Big Man’s plan to entertain white tourists at Yellowstone.

To imagine the hours of invisible labor, physical and otherwise, that Red Star spent withdrawing ancestors from their contexts is to imagine what was left over: hundreds of portraits and tableaux now bearing human-shaped lacunae. These altered photographs, only implied, simultaneously invoke and transpose the colonialist erasures wreaked upon those whom American institutions forget. Here, their names are written on the wall.

— Zack Hatfield



Wendy Red Star, *Um-basax-bilua*, “*Where They Make the Noise*” 1904–2016 (detail), 2017, archival pigment prints, graphite, pins, vinyl, dimensions variable.