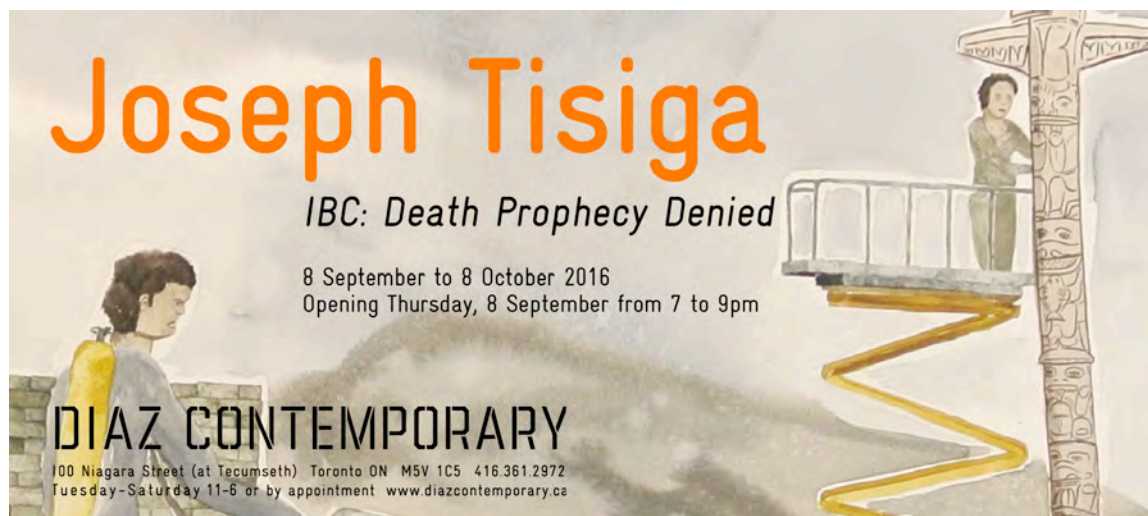


DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

IBC: Death Prophecy Denied or Busyness in the Face of Impending Doom
Joseph Tisiga at Diaz Contemporary

8 September – 8 October 2016
Opening Thursday 8 September, 7–9pm



Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present Joseph Tisiga's second solo exhibition at the gallery with a new series of watercolours and mixed media on Arches paper. Tisiga's Indigenous ancestry- Kaska Dene from the Liard River First Nation- informs the breadth of his practice, which grapples with issues of identity, historicism and tropes of representation with the very real politicized contexts that underlie his work. Tisiga has only selectively shown in Canada, though his reputation far extends his specific geography- Tisiga was a finalist in the 2009 RBC Painting Competition and was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2011. In 2012, Tisiga's delicately detailed watercolours were one of the highlights of MassMoCA's travelling blockbuster exhibition *Oh, Canada*.

Tisiga's choice of scale, palette and hanging all correspond to a long history of colonial documentation provided by the watercolour, traditionally used by the Europeans not only to record their early impressions of Natives across the Americas, but also to depict the landscape as uninhabited. Tisiga uses watercolour to reinvent his own images of encounter- disparate scenes that combine mythic ideologies of the "vanishing Indian" with obtuse symbols of Western modernity. Tisiga's concern is with the historic and ongoing heroic fetishization of the Indigenous from an aesthetic point of view. Cheeky critique of the Native object is hardly new but Tisiga's decision to couch it in a watercolour painting style subverts his agenda as contemporary and critical. He portrays a re-enactment of rituals on theatrical stages that enigmatically combine indoor and outdoor elements. Fictional allegories, so deeply embedded in First Nations storytelling, overarch the disparate narratives imagined by Tisiga whose use of appropriation of the watercolour and the ethnographic image allows him to call into question the ways in which colonization is represented through past, present, and future means. The spirit of a culture, Tisiga seems to be saying, lies in its many contradictions, even in its failures and tragedies.

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Joseph Tisiga was born in 1984 in Edmonton, Alberta and is a member of the Kaska Dene Nation. He is currently based in Whitehorse, YK. His work is in institutional collections such as the National Gallery of Canada, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the RBC Collection, MedCan, as well as numerous private collections in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.