

104 Work Weeks: On Tour With The Merce Cunningham Dance Company Series

Artist talk with **Kenneth E. Parris III**
Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at [6:30 pm](#)

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Artist, **Kenneth E. Parris III**, discusses the role of the figure in his paintings with William Petroni [on Tuesday, February 9, 2016, at 6:30 pm](#). Mr. Petroni is an Art Collector, General Manager for Cecily Brown, Managing Director of Cristin Tierney Gallery, and has danced with Melissa with the Pam Tanowitz Dance Company.

The conversation will focus on Kenneth's series inspired by the backstage life of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company on their final world tour and how this evolved into a new body of work that investigates the exploitation of success and the American Dream. The discussion includes Modern Contemporary Dancer and former Cunningham Company member Melissa Toogood, a subject in both bodies of work.

For two years, Kenneth joined members of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company documenting their final fifty city world tour through a series of drawings and paintings. He focused on the dancer's way of life, capturing quiet and private moments, loud parties, the rigors of traveling, celebratory dinners, exhaustion, and many rituals. The series titled, *104 Work Weeks: On Tour With The Merce Cunningham Dance Company* provides an intimate glimpse into the lives of dancers and illustrates a microcosm of human perseverance, cooperation, and commitment.

"Under the patina of grace and glamour, there lies a working-class ethic. In a world that seems to glorify hyper-individualism and social dysfunction, this group of people worked together everyday on and off stage," says Kenneth.

Observations like this led to the development of Kenneth's new body of work titled, *How we make it and survive while trying, struggling for an extraordinary and peaceful life*. Here, the human form and tension in the body is used as the physical embodiment of manipulative forces and a representation of the conflict between the ideal and reality. ARS NOVA, features two pieces from this new series.

