

On Dance

KATHY DUNCAN

David Gordon

David Gordon's one-man show, "Spilled Milk" at the Paula Cooper last Wednesday was fine, really fine—a thoroughly consistent, disciplined work colored by a whimsical humor. It also seemed to be about something. A dark man with unruly black hair and dark glasses stands still while his hands mechanically lift, cut, squeeze, flatten, turn and wring.

"This is my work," he says.

About 6 simple hand gestures combine in endless permutations. Gradually he adds other slow movement over the perpetual hands. He turns slowly from side to side. He kneels, or tilts his torso.

Gordon talks while doing this—a feat of coordination. Simple repetitious sentences about work. Rhymes about work. Bursts of Broadway tunes about work. His sentences change form, shifting gradually from one pole to the other of the working man's philosophy. All this overlays the playback of other verbal musings on two cassette players strapped to his belt.

David Gordon is at work. "This work," he says, "is no different from buying and cutting the ends off of string beans." That's what it is for Gordon—a task to be accomplished. For us it is something else. An intricate dance of hands patterned like random choices ticking out of a computer. A metaphor of the life process in a technological society.

It's clearly marked by all the years he worked with Yvonne Rainer and clearly states a lot of what that work was about: tasks, repetition, the ordinary human as dancer, the repudiation of exhibitionism, artfully artless art. □