
Mary Overlie's 'Painter's Dream'

By JENNIFER DUNNING

A door opens in the dark studio. A dancer enters and pauses, a silhouette in a small, harsh square of light. She walks out into the shadowy room and begins to dance. Lights from the street traffic pick out that weaving shape, then dapple walls and disappear. A chair creaks in the silence, the thud of a bare foot is heard from the dance floor.

The lights go on, softly at first. Four other dancers walk about with studied aimlessness. A man in a red vest murmurs unintelligibly in French, then drops his tie, then leaves the room. A baby smacks its thumb and coos, somewhere in the audience. Four dancers toss and turn against one wall, each his own rectangle of light. An arabesque is scrutinized with Lilliputian bemusement. A lean, mottled cat crosses the dance floor, then sinks on to its haunches in the center. The murmurer returns. The hands curl into specific, nonsense gestures.

A line is formed. There is a bow. The dancers disappear. In "Painter's Dream," seen at the Kitchen on Thursday, Mary Overlie has created a dance work as delicately inevitable as the whorled interior of a seashell.

Choreographed with the idiosyncracies of the Kitchen dance space in mind, the piece makes imaginative use of its pillars, odd corners and doors. Visual effect after effect flows past, for the artist's medium in this dream is movement. But the fugitive arrangements in space are integral parts of a seamless, small-scaled exploration of changing light, and the studio crannies, as well as the geometric scattering of dancers' bodies.

This is a restful dance, full of still moments that connect its five sections. A group dance in which the performers are used almost as totems follows the opening shadow solo, then "Painter's Dream" launches into more formal dance. Once a member of the San Fran-



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cisco Mime Troupe and a choreographer for the Mabou Mines theater group, Miss Overlie has studied with David Gordon and Merce Cunningham and has a ballet background. All three influences are evident in her use of natural stances, in Cunninghamesque exercises and in such balleticisms as a series of buoyant pas de chats.

The choreographer was joined by Wendell Beavers, Paul Reamy Langland, Nina Martin and David Warrilow in this magic dance, which may be seen again tonight.
