

Graham Thatcher Dance Untitled

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Alton has many empty buildings downtown. For most, these buildings require rehab before they can be put to use. But for the artist a deserted building can inspire, just as it is.

Graham Thatcher discovered the old Nolls bakery building at 515 East Third Street and saw a stage for dance – imagining he could capture the world dance transcends through photography. Exhibited in the same building, *Dance Untitled* illuminates a vacant space with the help of some artists.

Born and raised in Alaska, Graham Thatcher is an up and coming photographer - his most notable photographs prior to *Dance Untitled* were created while researching economies in India and traveling in Nepal. Those photographs and that trip led him to apply to return to India with a Fulbright grant. His work focuses largely on the human figure, tending toward fashion and documentary. Thatcher's photography however, rises above mere recording and finds itself in a place more in the reserve of art.

It is the crude space of the East Third Street building that draws attention to the grace, delicacy and beauty of the Principia College dancers Graham photographs. The dancers themselves are a study-in-contrast in their *untitled* process of rehearsal. Thatcher exposes the raw labor and emotion of the cast in preparation for their 2011 Winter Dance Production, opening February 24th at the College. Documenting the weeks of practice in 10 x 15 in color prints, he brings the dance to a pinnacle, with full costume and makeup, in the haunting and beautiful space of the historic building.

Almost life size (42 x 28 in) ink jet prints convey immediacy and power that is balanced by the stillness of an instant in time. Thatcher articulates tension and movement through the line and expression of his subject's bodies. This tension, this artistry, does not take place on a stage but in a tiled ice cream factory or bare studio -- spaces the artist transforms into something even grander than the stage for which the dance is designed.

On Sunday, February 20th, 1 to 4pm, all are welcome to come meet the artist and the dancers. There will be live music by bay area native, Kenji Yoshinobu with a special guest performance by Makena Gray. Refreshments will be provided by LaSalle St. Bakery. For more information, contact Penny Schmidt 618. 462 0401.

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