

Town focus Solana Beach

Different pointe of view

Photographer places ballerinas in most unlikely places

By Amanda Daniels
COMMUNITY NEWS WRITER

SOLANA BEACH — Costumed ballerinas take to the tarmac, bleachers and railroad tracks in the latest art exhibit at the Belly Up Tavern. This unusual show, "Behind the Line," features colorful photographs of pointe shoe- and tutu-clad dancers in unlikely places.

"The theme is incongruity, and it's an exercise in shape and form," photographer Lance Chang said. "Adding to the surrealism is that the colors are so wild."

Chang has been photographing wild themes for about seven years — twice as long as he's been going to the Belly Up.

"I'd always seen the artwork there and thought, 'That's pretty cool. It would be nice to see my own stuff on the wall,'" he said.

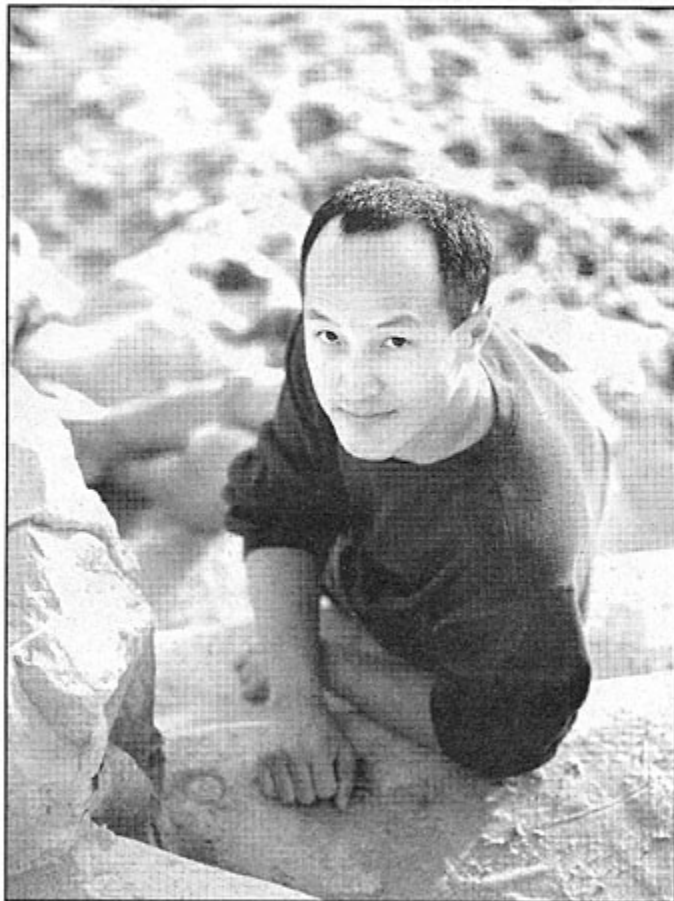
He finally gave the tavern a call last month, but didn't hear back until after he submitted samples.

Then, a few weeks ago, Chang got the chance to display his work. His collection of ballerinas is striking and seemed a natural choice for the art wall.

For this exhibit, he chose 15 pieces from the 24 scenes he originally shot. Ballerinas dance through difficult poses at the drive-in movies, a car wrecking yard, the beach and on top of a dam.

Everywhere Chang and his troupe of dancers went, he said, they stopped traffic.

They heard people yelling out their car windows when they worked on the train tracks, where they had to run from oncoming trains a few



Photographer Lance Chang's new exhibit, "Behind the Lines," places ballerinas in unexpected places, such as stadium bleachers (above right) or train tracks. Julie Cunningham



Lance Chang

the dimly lit Belly Up. Most of the shots were taken with color infrared film, which can brighten the blue of the sky, turn hair hot pink, skin to porcelain and grass vermilion, Chang said.

He got the idea for his project a few years ago after reading about the deteriorating Kirov and Moscow ballet companies. Accompanying the article was a picture of a desolate ballerina on a rooftop.

"I just spun it even more to, 'Where would you never expect to see these people?'" he said.

Next month, he'll be shooting more dancers in the middle of a cow pasture and in the desert.

"Beyond the Line" shows through Feb. 28 at the Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros Ave. The framed images are priced between \$125 and \$200. For more information, call (858) 481-9022 or visit www.bellyup.com.

times.

When they went to a soccer stadium where players were practicing, "Every once in a while you'd see them staring up in the stands looking like, 'What the heck is going on?'" Chang said.

At the airport, although he had

permission, a security guard almost kicked them out. And at a car wrecking yard, they were asked five times whether they were in the right place.

"By about the 10th shoot I got used to that, having to explain myself," Chang said.

The photographs stand out inside

Do you have a story idea for Solana Beach? Contact Amanda Daniels at (760) 476-8222 or amanda.daniels@uniontrib.com.