Kent Hutslar displays one of his black and white photos, ‘Two Trumpets and a Flute.’ The photo was originally taken in 1984 for an ad promoting a Vermillion Chamber Orchestra Concert, also named ‘Two Trumpets and a Flute.’

The beauty of this new career route is that it incorporated both his oil field knowledge and his love for the photographic art form. Hutslar is a commercial photographer. He'll go out to a rig one day and document a new drilling technique. The next day, you'll find him in the swamp photographing cypress trees. He'll photograph your wedding if you're willing to do it his way and pay his price.

He's one of only a handful of local professionals who can make a living from photography. The secret to his success, according to Hutslar, is that he'll go anywhere and do anything to get a job.

"I try to do things that relate to each one of my clients," said Hutslar. "In fashion and advertising fields, the companies expect him to create "a little magic.""

His need for magic, on one occasion, took him to the Atchafalaya Basin to photograph color print advertisements for a woodworking company. They wanted something which would catch the reader's eye in an ad promoting cypress doors. Hutslar took a glass-paneled cypress door out into the middle of the swamp and secured it to a tree trunk which had been grooved out. Swamp lilies were tied to the trunk to hide its existence.

The flowers should be green, right here though, thought, said Hutslar. The same photograph can be painted many different ways, each expressing its own emotion simply through a color change.

Hutslar's work will make one do a double-take. A lily, ordinarily white, might be painted bright blue. A graveyard scene shot in black and white has green plants growing between the tombstones.

"I use these paints as a control medium to make things happen as I want to see them happen," said Hutslar. The same photograph can be painted many different ways, each expressing its own emotion simply through a color change.

But, with the arrival of color, the production of these special oil paints was discontinued, and the art form slid into almost extinction. These works became collectors items, or pieces passed down through a family.

"I make people pay attention by changing things and putting them out of balance."

-Hutslar

Many families have one, or have seen such work - the little girl photographed in black and white who has shiny blue eyes, pink lips and rosy cheeks.

In the early 1980's, the paints were re-introduced to the art world, and now this type of painting/photography is on the upswing. Hutslar has always been a fan of this art form, and he quickly adapted his photography.

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A bent candy dish holding yellow flowers calls for another look. The flowers should be green, shouldn't they? And why is the dish bent?

"I make people pay attention by changing things and putting them out of balance. It makes you look at it harder and triggers that 'wait a minute, something's not right here thought,'" said Hutslar.

Hutslar's work has been on exhibit all around the country. He exhibits now in New Orleans at the Galerie de Jumonville, and locally his work has been at the Artist's Alliance and Le Centre International.

When touring a Hutslar exhibit, the viewer won't be able to make a quick run through the show. He's forced to stop and question whether or not he's looking at an exact duplication of real life - or Hutslar's interpretation of reality.

"It's an artist's prerogative. As Hutslar says, "I can make anything happen,"