

getting a **NEW** **Slant** on painting

by Christopher Schink

You can get different technical effects by changing the angle of your board.

Watercolor is not easy to control. When painting, if you tip your board up high, the paint runs off the paper and onto your shoes; and, if you lay your paper flat, the paint settles into something that looks like toxic waste. In order to have some control, most painters have learned to tip their board at about a 20-30° angle, just enough to allow the paint to flow downhill a little without creating too much excitement. They'd rather be safe than sorry.

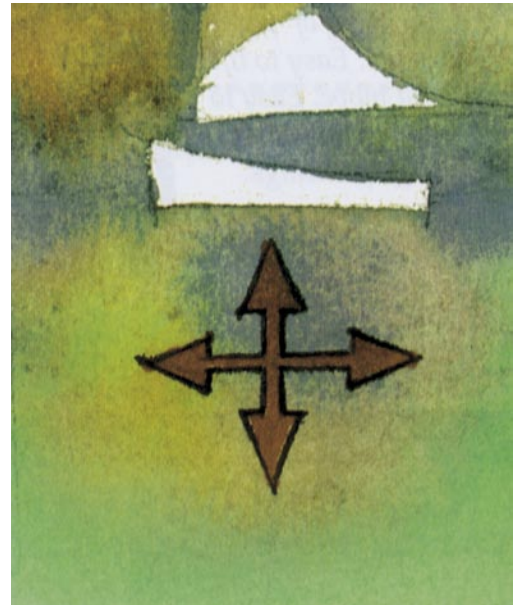
Almost all the professionals I know keep their paper and board at an angle close to vertical, probably for the same reasons I do: so they can better see what they're doing; so their students (if they teach) can see what they're doing; but, most of all, so they can achieve the maximum movement and intermingling of paint. And it does make painting an exciting event.

Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the different angles at which you can set your board.

FLAT

PRO'S—*Sedimentary pigments settle and granulate well. Paint is easy to control when working in small areas. You don't need a board if you work on heavy paper.*

CON'S—*Paint runs in **all** directions, puddles and turns into mud when overworked. Hard to see and reach what you're doing when working big.*



What's your angle?

Most beginning painters don't think much about the angle of their board. They just lay the paper on their dining room table, pull up a chair, and start painting. And if they lose control and everything settles into muddy puddles, they give it up and check to see what's on T.V.

Unless you're working very dry and careful-

ly, keeping your board flat can lead to problems. When you add paint to wet areas, it will run in all directions creating "blooms" or backwashes. Try these alternatives.

45° ANGLE

PRO'S—Easier to see what you're doing. Paint moves to create interesting, varied color combinations. Easier to reach on large paintings.

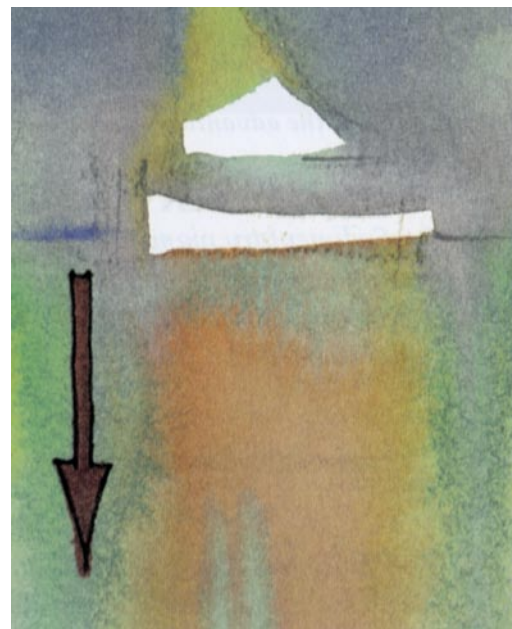
CON'S—Sacrifice some control. Less sedimentation of pigment. Requires sturdy easel.



80°-90°- ANGLE

PRO'S—Paints flow rapidly downhill to create interesting intermingling of pigments. Easy to lift and move. Easy to see and reach when working on large paintings.

CON'S—Hard to control. Paper must be secured to sturdy easel. Very little granulation of sedimentary pigments.



Try varying the angle of your board

A Combination of Angles

You might try varying the angle of your board as you proceed through a painting, starting with it high to get the maximum flow of paint, then lowering it in stages to achieve greater control of smaller areas and details. Different angles are required for different techniques. I often lower my board to a 30 degree angle when I add

glazes on top of my earlier washes. And I raise my board to 90 degrees at regular intervals to judge the progress of my painting. Experiment with painting at different angles. If you don't have an easel and don't want to invest in one, you can use a large, cardboard box cut at a slope to hold your board. You could get a new slant on painting.