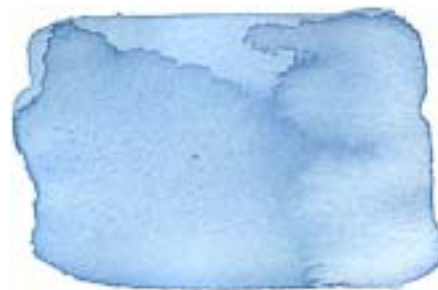*Wet-into-Wet Wash*

mix, however, or you will end up with a gray-brown more uniform wash instead of one with slightly intermixed colors. Wet-into-wet washes make good backgrounds, but can also add interest to smaller areas when confined by dry paper (hard edges) into a specific shape. I frequently use wet-in-wet washes to create the ribbons that appear often in my Fabricscape Series paintings.

How to Paint a Flat Wash

There are two criteria for getting a smooth, even tone/value of color in a flat wash:

(1) **Complete the entire wash before any of it is dry.** This is generally not a problem on smaller paintings, because you don't have much area to paint in, but on a full sheet watercolor, you have to paint fast and furiously if you have a very large area (like a background) to cover with a flat wash of color. Use the biggest brush you are comfortable with. It will hold more paint and let you cover a larger area more quickly.

Tip: If the entire wash is still wet when you finish, you can tilt your board back and forth a little to more evenly disperse the pigment particles suspended in water. Do this ONLY if the entire wash area is still wet. If the first part of it has started to dry, introducing wetter paint back into this area will cause a backrun (sometimes called a balloon) or at the least, an uneven area of color and/or hard edges within the wash..

This is what happens if you tilt (or introduce) wet paint into an area that has started to dry.

(2) **Pre-mix your wash in your palette or a paper cup.** You don't want to run out of the color you have mixed when you are halfway through your wash! You will never match the color again exactly, so mix more than you think you will need. Mixing the color first ensures an even tone that you could never achieve if you were trying to mix the color on the paper as you went. Even slight variations in the paint to water ratio will cause unevenness in the wash.

What is the painting technique for a flat wash?

Your paper should be at a very slight angle. If you're using a block, or have stretched your paper on a board, you can prop it up at the far side with a book. The angle causes the wet paint to accumulate along the bottom of your strokes, causing a "bead" of paint to form. This bead stays wetter longer, so gives you time to reload your brush with more paint, get back to the paper and make your next strokes, slightly overlapping the first strokes and catching the bead of paint so that the strokes blend together perfectly as you work the paint over the paper. Continue as rapidly as you can to fill in the entire area you want to have the same flat wash color. When you're finished, wipe your brush on a sponge or paper towel to remove all the excess paint and water, then use this "dry" brush to pick up any excess bead of paint from your wash. You can also mop up excess paint at the end of your wash with a piece of paper towel touched to the

paint "bead" along lower edge of wash