

Can art enrich spiritual exploration? **Jean Eglinton, C'10**, and **Miriam Terlinchamp, C'10**, fifth-year rabbinical students, have answered that question with a resounding 'yes!' Eglinton explains, "Art is important as an interpretive tool for Jewish text, history, and experience for several reasons. It can be more engaging than literary production for some people who are not drawn to text alone, or even as a change of pace for those who are. It uses different parts of our brains and especially appeals to emotional intelligence."

Armed with a B.A. in Art from Antioch College, Eglinton worked as a freelance illustrator prior to attending HUC-JIR. She continues to work as an artist in a variety of mediums while completing her rabbinical studies in Cincinnati. She specializes in pa-

Working for the past ten years as a Hebrew teacher, Eglinton has used her art to help her students, both children and adults, "loosen up, enjoy themselves, and think about what we're learning in a different way. I'm sure that this approach will continue to be a vital part of my rabbinical career."

Miriam Terlinchamp has found extensive ways to weave art into her rabbinical studies at the Los Angeles campus. Terlinchamp has continued taking art classes throughout her time at HUC-JIR in an effort to find creative ways to complement and expand upon her rabbinical studies. "Art is a mode of prayer for us, it's a way of connecting to the divine," she explains. "So, visual art is important in a worship space. We've been so creative with synagogue music, which heightens



Miriam Terlinchamp, C'10, and her supervisor, Rabbi Yosi Carron at the Los Angeles County Jail.

The Artist as Rabbinical Student

Samantha Massell

percuts, where she renders text in Hebrew and English and layers the text with interpretive imagery. Her skill as a photographer captured HUC-JIR students' experiences on the American Jewish World Service mission to Mexico. (See page 25)

Her capstone project for Ordination is a visual commentary on *Yotzer Or*, one of her favorite prayers, which celebrates the daily renewal of creation. "Visual art can be a midrashic sort of interpretation of a text," she notes.



"M'lo Chol Ha'aretz" by Jean Eglinton.

made sure not to leave that part of her life behind. Now in the process of incorporating art into her senior thesis, she is working closely with Ruth Weisberg, Dean of the USC Roski School of Fine Arts.

prayer to a whole new level. We ought to be able to do the same with visual art."

Terlinchamp majored in Studio Art and Religious Studies as an undergraduate at Scripps College and worked as a graphic designer before applying to rabbinical school and has clearly

She has also brought her interest in art to her internships, from her student pulpit at Bet Chaverim in Des Moines, WA, and the Jewish Home for the Aged in Los Angeles to her chaplaincy for violent felons at the Los Angeles County Jail, where she met weekly to counsel prisoners, Jewish and non-Jewish, and performed monthly *Shabbat* services. Terlinchamp has also been working with the Jewish Artists' Initiative, where she is a rabbinical mediator between guest rabbis and the group of professional artists who join together for *beit midrash* study. Since beginning her work there, Terlinchamp has brought this program to HUC-JIR, so that students can find ways to use art to explore Judaism.

According to Terlinchamp, "Visual artists are the 'people of the book' who are really good with words. Visual art pushes us to imagine those words in a very unique way that benefits artists and non-artists alike. Visual art can be a channel into our studies and also an avenue towards Jewish meaning and prayer. If we explore our own stories, we can learn more about our relationships with our traditions." ■