

## Photos showcase coexistence

BY CLINT COOPER  
STAFF WRITER

If Jews and Muslims can live together in harmony in Morocco, they can do it in the rest of the Middle East, in the United States and across the world, said planners of a public exhibit showcasing peaceful coexistence.

“Drinking From the Same Well”, an exhibit of the Moroccan photography of California professional artist Rose-Lynn Fisher, will open in Chattanooga at the Jewish Cultural Center on Sept.12.

Michael Dzik, executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of Greater Chattanooga, and Abdou Kattih, director of the Islamic Education and Services Institute of Chattanooga, said the partnership of the organizations in bringing the exhibit here is important for Chattanoogaans to see. “It shows Jews and Muslims can get along peacefully and be friends,” Mr.Dzik said.

A Community Cultural Connections grant from Allied Arts also helped bring the exhibition to Chattanooga, officials from the sponsoring organizations said.

“It shows we can work together – something we all want,” Mr. Kattih said.

The 40 black and white photographs, taken in 1995 and 1998, include Jewish homes, abandoned *mellahs* (Jewish quarters) and Jewish and Muslim people in their daily lives.

Ms. Fisher said while each exhibit of her Morocco photos has incorporated the theme of peaceful coexistence, the Chattanooga showing is the first time Jewish and Muslim communities have used the exhibit as a point of departure in fostering positive relationships with each other.

“That my own pivotal experience in Morocco has relevance now in a way I could never have imagined is deeply moving and humbling, answering a deep prayer,” she said.

Ms. Fisher, who is Jewish, previously has exhibited some of the photographs at the Jewish Museum New York; the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Umm el-Fahm, Israel; the Chicago Cultural Center; the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine in Orono; and the Museum of Anthropology at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Mr. Dzik said the Jewish Cultural Center had sponsored events in which Jews and Christians worked together and events in which Jews and Blacks worked together, but had not specifically worked with a Muslim group.

“It’s so important to see that they can live without (violence in Morocco),” he said, “and so can we.”

Aziz Mekouar, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United States, is scheduled to speak at the opening of the exhibit Sept 12. That will be followed the next day by a dinner and presentation by Ms. Fisher.

The exhibit will be on display through Nov. 14. Group and school tours are no charge with advance reservations.

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