

When I think about Sheikh Nasser his kindness comes to mind. In February 1983, the National Museum of Kuwait opened and many of us were not only invited to the opening but Sheikh Nasser sent us an airplane to pick us up and, after the festivities, to take us home. I was 30 at the time, Bashir's secretary at Spinks, and shy and insecure.

The opening was memorable because the collection was the first important private/museum collection to be formed and then exhibited after the World of Islam Festival in London in 1975. It was of course a wonderful collection, now partly on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, but I am ashamed to say it wasn't the art that I remember but the party and the people which fascinated/terrified me. Gennady Zalkowitsch doing press-ups in the airplane's aisle. Jennifer Scarce belly dancing at one of the parties where I sat in silence at a table with bejewelled and turbaned Maharajas (probably as shy as me), the super glamorous Princess Ezra Jah and Oliver Hoare - these were just a few of my impressions.

Eventually, I was overwhelmed and so hid in my hotel room. Sheikh Nasser rang me and when I pretended mild illness, he offered to send me his doctor because he was concerned. I tell this story because a man who must have had a myriad of responsibilities on his mind had the kindness to check up on a 30-year-old nobody-of-a-secretary. It was very sweet and I never forgot.

Francesca Golloway