

In 1998 Sheikh Nasser invited me to come to Kuwait to work on aspects of the collection, through the thoughtfulness of Katie Marsh and Sue Kaoukji in recommending me. Tucked away in the labyrinth of the museum surrounded by works of art it never occurred to me that one would see him on a daily basis.

However, he had a way of suddenly appearing without ceremony and fixing his eye on whatever it was one was researching – a habit that I recall being employed by Peter Wilson, chairman of Sotheby's, in the 1970s. Formalities dispensed with, his innate charm and vivacity drew one in and drove his passion to get to the heart of the matter. Into the crucible were flung penetratingly relevant questions, humorous asides about buying trips to India, points on technical detail (that critical aspect of judging a work of art), coffee and cigarettes, and so an often-protracted discussion evolved, usually informed by the arrival of his then curator Manuel Keene.

It is rare enough for a single individual to form a national collection in the course of his lifetime, but Sheikh Nasser's intimate knowledge of the many thousands of works in his collection, and his ability to expand his interests not only in Islamic Art but in the formation more recently of unique collections from the eastern provinces of the Ancient World were inspiring.

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