

December 21, 2020

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Dear Friends,

The Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art mourns the passing of Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, a major force in the Islamic art world. Sheikh Nasser was an inspired lover of art, and was an early pioneer of collecting in the Gulf, building an unmatched collection in Kuwait. Together with his wife Sheikha Hussa al-Sabah, he supported cultural activities, scholarly projects and publications and education, and with Met collaboration established a distinguished museum in Kuwait in 1983 (which is in the process of being restored since its destruction in the first Gulf War). At The Met, Sheikh Nasser was Honorary Trustee while Sheikha Hussa remains an active member of the Board. Their support for the museum includes endowments towards positions, exhibitions and collaborations. The al-Sabah collection of breathtaking Mughal jewels was shown in the "Treasury of the World" exhibition in 2002.

Sheikh Nasser's passion and pursuit of objects was legendary. Ever on a quest for an interesting object his keen eye spotted extraordinary works from the sale rooms of London and Paris to the bazaars of Balochistan. Although his art collection is perhaps most famous for its Mughal gems and treasures, he also built a vast and important trove of Islamic textiles, metalwork, ceramics, glass, armor, and most recently, pre-Islamic art from the east.