

Curriculum Vitae

Hussah Sabah Salem al-Sabah

Nationality: Kuwaiti

Born: 1950

Education: BA in English Literature, University of Kuwait

Director General, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah **1983 – present**

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI) is the institution created to manage The al-Sabah Collection of art from the Islamic world. In addition to work directly related to the collection, DAI is also actively involved in several community and professional education and cultural awareness programmes, which includes an annual lecture series, the development and maintenance of a reference library and the production and distribution of a wide array of publications.

The annual lecture series, in its 14th season, features lectures by prominent international scholars on various topics related to Islamic history, including thought, art, archaeology and architecture, and is considered to be a focal point for historians and other academics. The DAI sponsors archaeological excavations, including one in Upper Egypt that has yielded finds that date to the Fatimid period. In addition, DAI is now offering conservation training.

Implemented in conjunction with the UNDP and a corps of professional conservators, the programme provides appropriately educated young Kuwaitis with the opportunity to learn the necessary skills to preserve and protect valuable pieces of their heritage. Finally, the DAI opened the Amricani Cultural Centre in the spring of 2011. The centre serves as a training museum and includes a 200-seat theatre, two exhibitions, a conservation lab, an education wing, and temporary exhibition space.

Co-owner, The al-Sabah Collection, **1975 – present**

With her husband, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Ahmed al-Sabah, Minister of Al Diwan Al Amiri Affairs and elder son of His highness The Amir of Kuwait, Sheikha Hussah Sabah Salem al-Sabah, daughter of the former Amir of Kuwait formed The al-Sabah Collection which is considered by many scholars to be among the most

important collections of art from the Islamic world. The collection includes more than 20,000 objects of art of different media from Early Islam to the 18th century, covering all historical periods and geographical regions of the Islamic world. On loan to the State of Kuwait since 1983, under the auspices of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, the collection has been and, after the reconstruction is complete, will be again on display at the Kuwait National Museum.

Memberships:

- Member, United Nations Development Programme
- Member, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science
- Member, The Kuwait University Council
- Member of Board of the Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Kuwait
- Member of Advisory Cultural Committee of l'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France
- Academician, International Information Academy, Moscow, Russia
- Benefactor Member, World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM), Mexico City, Mexico.
- Member, International Council on Monuments and Sites, Paris, France
- Member and donor, The Friends of the Hermitage, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia
- Member, Iran Heritage Foundation, London, England
- Former Member of Steering Committee of Islamic Research Centre for History, Arts and Culture in Istanbul, Turkey
- Head of Kuwait Information Centre in Damascus, Syria during the occupation of Kuwait, 1990-91

Activities:

- Acquisition of objects for the DAI collection
- Development of Islamic Arts and Culture reference library
- Management of Amricani Cultural Centre (Spring 2011)
- Execution of cultural season programmes, including the selection of lecturers and performs
- Management of DAI publications including:

- *Hadeeth ad-Dar*, quarterly journal
 - *Bareed ad-Dar*, bi-monthly newsletter
 - Guidebooks for museum visitors
 - Exhibition catalogues
 - Seminar reports
 - Illustrated full texts from lecture series
- Guest lecturer and participant in international conferences
 - Papers presented locally at Kuwait University (in English and Arabic) and other cultural institutions in Kuwait. Ongoing
 - “From Private to Public: The Metamorphosis of the al-Sabah Collection”, Bard Graduate Center, New York, USA, 2008
 - “From Private to Public: The Metamorphosis of the al-Sabah Collection”, Historians of Islamic Art Association, Pennsylvania, USA, 2008
 - “Korean-Arab Relations”, International Conference to Launch the Korea-Arab Society, Seoul, Korea, 2008
 - “Religions and the Alliance of Civilizations: Advancing Shared Security”, World Conference of Religions for Peace, Madrid, Spain, 2008
 - “The Importance of Cultural Diversity”, UNESCO Conference, Kuwait, 2007
 - “Paths and Pitfalls of Interreligious Understanding”, Salzburg Trilogue 2007
 - “Formation of an Islamic Art Collection: the Kuwaiti Experience”, Sotheby’s Geneva, Switzerland, 1998
 - “Metamorphosis of Private Collection into Public Institution” at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 1998.
 - “Islamic Art in War and Peace”, for the 3rd AMAR-UNESCO conference, European and Islamic Dialogue: a Permanent Space or Dialogue (March 5-7 1997) at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France 1997

- “Islamic Art in War and Peace”, Kuwait Cultural Centre, London, UK 1996.
 - “Artistic Genesis in Wood and Stone: Objects from the Kuwait Museum of Islamic Art”, American University of Beirut, Lebanon, 1996
 - “The Enigma of the Three Emeralds”, British Embassy, Kuwait, 1994
 - “The Story of a Door”, at Accademia Delle Arti Del Disegno, Florence, Italy, 1994.
 - “My Favorite Object”, British Council, Kuwait, 1993.
- Excavation of sites in al-Sabbiya and Kadhama, Kuwait. 2007 – 2008
 - Second Japanese-Kuwaiti joint excavation in the Raya/al-Tur area, Sinai Peninsula. 2007 – 2008
 - First Japanese-Kuwaiti joint excavation in the Raya/al-Tur area, Sinai Peninsula. 2005 – 2006
 - Excavation of Islamic sites such as Bahnasa in Upper Egypt, in cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS). 1985- 1987
 - Organisation of visiting exhibitions and catalogues
 - *Flowers from the Ashes* (in honour of the visit of former U.S. President George Bush to Kuwait, 1993)
 - *Dutch Cartography (1993)*
 - *Kuwait in Early Maps (1993)*
 - *The Overseas Business of the Dutch (1993)*
 - *Turkish Calligraphy (1992)*
 - *Masterpieces from the Heritage (1990)*
 - *Handicrafts of Daghestan (1990)*
 - *Islamic Coins in Sweden (1989)*
 - *Photographs of Old Jerusalem (1988)*
 - *Qur’anic Manuscripts from Beit Al- Qur’an, Bahrain (1987)*
 - *Variety in Unity (1987)*
 - *Science in Islam (1984)*

- *Opening of Dar al-Athar l-Islamiyyah (1983)*

Note: Most of the above exhibitions were held in DAI's facilities within the Kuwait National Museum complex, before the destruction of the premises there during the occupation. The last exhibition on the premises was "*Masterpieces from the Hermitage*". The exhibitions which followed were hosted in other Kuwait National Museum facilities and Kuwait University.

- Organisation of exhibitions

- ***The Story of Amricani***

25 February 2011 - Permanent

Amricani Cultural Centre, Kuwait City, Kuwait

This multi-media exhibition tells the story of healthcare in Kuwait, from the arrival of the first western doctors in the early 20th century to Kuwait's funding of health-related projects in under-developed countries today.

- ***Al-Fann: Art from Islamic Civilization***

20 October 2010 – indefinite

Beautifully described by Professor Giovanni Curatola of Udine University, the curator of al-Fann, "this exhibition has the ambitious purpose of giving a proper response to the growing interest in the rich culture of Islamic civilization. It will give this culture the balanced representation of the scholar, suffused with the passion of the art-lover". With more than 350 outstanding objects from The al-Sabah Collection, the exhibition presents different materials including ivory, glass, stucco, pottery, metal works, manuscripts, woodwork, textile and carpets.

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria:

21 March 2011 – 20 June 2011

Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy:

20 October 2010 – 30 January 2011

- ***Treasury of the World: the Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals***

20 February 2009 – indefinite

16 May 2001 – 11 April 2005

Considered one of the most comprehensive and richest collections of Indian jewelled arts in the world, *Treasury* was inaugurated at British Museum, London on 16th May 2001. It then moved to the USA where it was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Fine Arts Museum, Houston, Texas and St. Louis Museum of Art, Missouri. Moving to the Royal Palace in Madrid, *Treasury* was opened by the King and Queen of Spain, and is currently on exhibit at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin. *Treasury of the World* will close its European tour at the Louvre, Paris in the summer of 2006. The catalogue accompanying this exhibition contains photographs and descriptions of all 395 pieces, identifying each object by catalogue number and The Collection's registration number; detailing the materials, techniques, measurements and regional and temporal attribution; recording the source and date of its acquisition by The Collection; and listing any previous publication history.

Amricani Cultural Centre, Kuwait City, Kuwait:

25 February 2011 - indefinite

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:

2 June 2010 – 31 December 2010

Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore:

1 February 2010 – 25 April 2010

The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia:

7 July 2009 – 8 November 2009

Kremlin Museums, Moscow, Russia:

20 February 2009 – 20 May 2009

Musée du Louvre, Paris, France: 6 July 2007 – 4 September 2007

Museum für Islamische Kunst & Martin Gropius Bau- Berlin,

Germany: 28 January 2005 - 20 April 2005

Palacio Real- Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, Spain:

15 October 2004 – 9 January 2005

The Saint Louis Art Museum, MI, USA:

8 November 2002 - 27 April 2003

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, TX, USA:

30 June 2002 - 27 October 2002

The Cleveland Museum of Art, OH, USA:

24 February 2002 - 19 May 2002

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA:

15 October 2001 - 13 January 2002

The British Museum: 16 May 2001 - 2 September 2001

- ***Temples and Kings in the First Millennium***

Kuwait University, Kuwait: 16 May – 15 June 2004

- ***Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait***, (IAP)

31 October 2008 – 28 February 2009

6 August 1990 – 22 June 2003

left Kuwait in September 1990, opening at The State Hermitage

Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia 6 days after the invasion of Kuwait.

It continued to travel for 13 years, hosted in 22 museums in fourteen

countries including, UK, USA (Maryland, Texas, Georgia, Arizona,

Virginia, Missouri & Louisiana), Canada, France, Netherlands, Italy,

Germany, Portugal, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Australia (Perth &

Sydney) and New Zealand. Because of its high publicity during the

occupation of Kuwait, IAP became a powerful political statement and

a true Kuwait Ambassador to the world. The fully illustrated

catalogue accompanying this exhibition includes discussions by

prominent scholars in the field of Islamic art. It has been published in

English, French, Dutch, Italian and German.

Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah, UAE:

31 October 2008 – 28 February 2009

Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland, New Zealand:

18 April 2003 - 22 June 2003

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia:

30 November 2002 – 27 January 2003

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia:

27 June 2002 - 15 September 2002

National Museum Bahrain, Cultural & National Heritage, Manama,
Bahrain: 10 January 2001 - 10 March 2001

National Museum, King Abdulaziz Historical Center, al Murabba,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: 8 October 2000 - 8 November 2000

Mohammad Mahmoud Khalil Museum, Cairo, Egypt:
6 April 1999 - 6 July 1999

Brunei Gallery, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of
London, UK; 30 September 1998 - 11 December 1998

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal:
22 October 1997 - 22 February 1998

Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main, Germany:
22 May 1996 - 20 October 1996

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England:
11 April 1995 - 25 June 1995

Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Italy: 18 March 1994 - 19 May 1994

Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Holland:
13 June 1993 - 7 November 1993

Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France:
12 February 1993 - 16 May 1993

New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, USA:
14 November 1992 - 10 January 1993

Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec, Canada;
4 June 1992 - 4 October 1992

St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, MI, USA:
15 February 2002 - 12 April 1992

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, USA:
5 November 1991 - 19 January 1992

Scottsdale Art Center, Scottsdale, AZ, USA:
5 October 1991 - 13 October 1991

Emory University Museum of Art and Archaeology, Atlanta, GA,
USA: 19 June 1991 - 22 September 1991

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, USA:
16 March 1991 - 12 May 1991

Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, MD, USA:

9 December 1990 - 17 February 1991

Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, USSR:

6 August 1990 - 31 August 1990

- ***Zarabi, Carpets: Reflection of an Ideal World***

Islamic Art Museum, Malaysia: 17 April 1999 - 17 July 1999

16 rugs

- ***Flowers from the Ashes***

Kuwait National Museum: 14 April 1993 - 31 May 1993,

in honour of President George Bush's visit to Kuwait

116 objects including calligraphy, ceramics, glass, hardstones, ivory, jewellery, metal, manuscripts, rugs, stones, textiles and wood.

- ***Kuwait History and Culture***

Bab al-Bahrain Exhibition Hall, Bahrain:

14 December 1987 - 6 January 1988, for Bahrain National Day

101 including ceramics, glass, leather, manuscripts and numismatics

- ***Variety in Unity***

Bayan Palace, Kuwait: January 1987, on the occasion of the Fifth Islamic Summit

209 objects including calligraphy, ceramics, glass, hardstone, jewellery, leather, manuscripts, metal, numismatics and stone

- ***Science in Islam***

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait: 27 November 1984, the occasion of the Fifth Summit Conference of the Gulf Cooperation Council

22 objects of metal, manuscripts and wood

- Participation in international exhibitions

- **Opening Exhibition**

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar:

1 December 2008 – 22 February 2009

1 metal goblet

- **Frederick II**

Landes Museum Natur Und Mensch, Oldenburg, Germany:

10 February 2008 – 15 June 2008

1 manuscript and 2 ivory objects

○ **Safavid Exhibition**

Louvre Museum, Paris, France: 1 October 2007 – 7 January 2008

1 manuscript and 2 metal objects

○ **The Shining Princess**

Museum of Kyoto, Kyoto, Japan: 9 June 2007 – 22 July 2007

1 jewellery piece

○ **Kreuz Ritter Pilger, Krieger, Abenteurer**

Schloss Schallaburg, Schallaburg, Austria:

30 March 2007 – 4 November 2007

8 jewellery, glass, crystal and hardstone pieces

○ **Pearls**

Abu Dhabi International Pearl Festival, Abu Dhabi, UAE:

6 December 2006 – 5 February 2007

American Museum of Natural History, NY, USA:

September 2001 - 14 February 2003

The Field Museum, Chicago, USA: 28 June 2002 - 5 January 2003

3 jewellery objects

○ **Saladin Und Die Kreuzfahrer**

Landes Museum Natur Und Mensch, Oldenburg, Germany:

5 March 2006 – 2 July 2006

Various jewellery, glass, crystal and hardstone pieces

○ **Bellini and the East**

National Gallery, London, UK: 12 April 2006 – 26 June 2006

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA, USA:

1 December 2005 – 26 March 2006

1 manuscript

○ **Diamonds**

Natural History Museum, London, UK:

9 July 2005 – 26 February 2006

2 jewellery pieces

○ **The Adventures of Hamza**

Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland:

28 June 2003 - 21 October 2003

Royal Academy of Arts, London, England:

15 March 2003 - 8 June 2003

Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, USA:

1 November 2002 - 26 January 2003

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC, USA:

21 June 2002 – September 2002

1 manuscript

- **The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia 1256-1353**

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA, CA USA:

13 April - 27 July 2003

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA:

28 October 2002 - 16 February 2003

2 objects, manuscript and wood

- **Chevaux et Cavaliers Arabes, dans les Arts d'Orient et d'Occident**

Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France:

25 November 2002 -- 30 March 2003

3 objects including ceramics and metal

- **Glass of the Sultans**

The Benaki Museum, Athens, 20 February 2002 - 15 May 2002

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

1 October 2001 - 13 January 2002

The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning,

24 May 2001 - 3 September 2001

24 glass objects

- **Les Andalouses, de Damas à Cordoue**

Fundación El Legado Andalusi, Cordoba, Spain:

3 May - 30 September 2001

L'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France:

27 November 2000 - 15 April 2001

- 1 stone object
- **El Esplendor De Los Omeyas Cordobeses Cordoba**
Archaeological Site of Madinat At-Zahra, Cordoba, Spain
2 May 2001 – 30 September 2001
1 capital
- **Schätze der Kalifen, Islamische Kunst zur Fatimidenzeit**
Kunsthistorisches Museum (Künstlerhaus), Vienna, Austria:
15 November 1998 - 21 February 1999
12 objects including manuscripts, ceramics, ivory, jewellery and manuscripts
- **Trésors Fatimide du Caire**
Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France: 27 April - 30 August 1998
12 objects including manuscripts, ceramics, ivory, jewellery and manuscripts
- **Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets from the Mughal Era**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA:
17 November 1997 - 1 March 1998
1 rug
- **A l'Ombre d'Avicenne, les Siècles Arabes de la Médecine**
Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France:
18 November 1996 -- 2 March 1997
8 objects including ceramics, glass and metal
- **Africa: The Art of a Continent**
The Royal Academy of Arts, London, England:
5 October 1995 – 28 January 1996
Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany:
End February - end April 1996.
6 objects including ceramics, manuscripts and wood.
- **Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images, Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA:
1 February 1994 - 3 July 1994
1 manuscript

- **Romance of the Taj Mahal**
Asia Society, New York, USA: 10 January 1991 - 17 March 1991,
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, USA:
23 August - 25 November 1990,
Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH, USA:
29 April 1990 - 24 June 1990,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA, CA, USA:
17 December 1989 – 11 March 1990,
6 objects of hardstone, jewellery and stone
- **Tapis Present de l'Orient à l'Occident**
Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France:
6 November 1989 - 25 March 1990
4 rugs
- **Les Sciences dans la Civilisation Arabo-Islamique**
Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France:
21 September 1989 - 7 January 1990
27 manuscripts
- **Isnik**
Ibrahim Pasha Museum, Istanbul, Turkey:
16 September 1989 - 16 December 1989
2 ceramic objects
- **Timur and the Princely Vision, Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century**
Arthur Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.,
USA: 16 April - 6 July 1989
1 manuscript
- **The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA:
4 October 1987 - 17 January 1988
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA:
14 June - 7 September 1987
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA:
25 January - 17 May 1987

- 7 objects including ceramics, rugs and textiles
- **India! Art and Culture 1300 - 1900**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA:
14 September 1985-- 6 January 1986
4 hardstone and jewellery objects
- **Islam Konst och Kultur**
Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, Sweden, (The Museum of National Antiquities): May 1985 - December 1985
12 objects including calligraphy, ceramics, metal, manuscripts, textiles and wood.
- **Treasures of Islam**
Musée Rath, Geneva, Switzerland: 25 June - 27 October 1985
15 objects including ceramics, glass, ivory, jewellery, manuscripts, stone and wood
- **Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA:
November 1981 – January 1982
1 ivory piece
- Organisation of seminars and conferences
 - **Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah Cultural Season**
a weekly lecture series – now in its 14th season - from October to June, featuring a concentration of international scholars specializing in the fields of Islamic civilization, it's arts and architecture, archaeology, thought, literature and history.
 - **Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah Children's Art Workshop**
a monthly programme for children using pieces from The al-Sabah Collection to promote art and culture in the Islamic world.
 - **Egyptian Archeological Society lecture**
Dr. Géza Fehérvári, sponsored by Sheikha Hussah. 2006
 - ***Kuwait and its Historic Identity***
a conference that was held in Cambridge, England in 1995 and Frankfurt, Germany in 1996, in which papers were presented by a

panel of international scholars on the topic of early Kuwaiti history. It featured new discoveries of sources from European archives which were previously unknown, including the earliest Arabic source describing Kuwait in the year 1709 as an already thriving town. These papers have since been published in a book edited by Dr. Ben Slot.

- **Archaeological excavations at Bahnasa**
Seminar in Kuwait, discussing the results of the archaeological excavations at Bahnasa, Egypt. 1986

- Production of audiovisual programmes and documentary films, including
 - ***Islamic Civilization and its Culture***, a film produced by Franklin Trout based on The al-Sabah Collection
 - ***Aziza ya Kuwait***, a combination of film and live musical performance, depicting traditional life in old Kuwait
 - ***Ibn Batuta***, an innovative, multi-media production portrays the travels of the 14th century adventurer through film footage, images of objects in The al-Sabah Collection, combined with live performance portraying the Moroccan traveler on stage.
 - ***Malameh Kuwaitiah***, a fifteen minute presentation of traditional songs and dance of the desert, sea and city of Kuwait through a combination of visual images and live dancing.
 - ***Art in the Islamic World: al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait National Museum***, an interactive DVD of The al-Sabah Collection featuring presentations by international specialists, 400 objects in detail, 100 animated in 3D, video, reference catalogue and search tools with easy interface.

- Conservation and preservation of traditional architecture, including
 - Kuwait: American Mission Hospital buildings located near the Parliament building. This project was begun in 1995 and is being managed in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

- Egypt: Khudives period house located behind al-Azhar Mosque.
- Aleppo: Jumblatt House, a 17th Century palace (preparatory studies began 1997)
- Damascus: Old stone and mud houses located in the area adjacent to the Umayyad Mosque (1996)
- Bahrain: Muharraq-mud house with traditional Bahraini architectural elements (1988)