

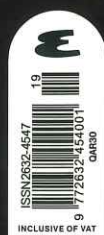
Esquire

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QATAR

AT HOME, EVERYWHERE

HOW **MOHAMMED AL THANI**
IS DEMYSTIFYING
THE WORLD OF ARAB
AND ISLAMIC ART



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A masterclass in sustainable artistry

LIFE ENERGY by
Sassan Behnam-Bakhtiar
at Patina Maldives

by Narges Raiss



In the shimmering embrace of the Indian Ocean, where the horizon blurs into an endless palette of blues, lies the epitome of luxurious retreat at Patina Maldives, Fari Islands. This haven is not just a sanctuary of unparalleled beauty but a crucible of creativity where the boundaries between art, design, and life dissolve into one harmonious experience.

Enter the “Life Energy” exhibition by French-Iranian artist, Sassan Behnam-Bakhtiar divided between South of France and Doha. If you are not familiar with Behnam-Bakhtiar’s work, he is more than an artist; he is a keeper of energies, someone who can put into shape the ineffable and mix old wisdoms within new aesthetics. Life Energy is a new chapter in Behnam-Bakhtiar’s journey—started during his

six-month residency at Fari Art Atelier, where he also describes it as ‘his legacy’.

Here, in this secluded paradise, the visionary artist found his inspiration not in the usual trappings of the modern world, but in the very essence of the island itself. The result? A collection of miniature paintings, each 20cm by 20cm, expertly crafted using natural pigments sourced from the island’s own flora, fauna, and even its sands and shells. The artist’s use of materials like minerals, wood, roots, and corals—meticulously gathered from the island itself—imbues each piece with a profound sense of place and purpose. His dedication to sustainability is reflected in every aspect of the Life Energy series. From the pigments derived from minerals and plants to the naturally treated wood and linen that form the canvases, every



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element is chosen with care, ensuring that the art not only speaks to the viewer but also respects the earth from which it was born.

Behnam-Bakhtiar’s process, rooted in his signature style of *peinture raclée*, involves layers of energy, emotions, and time, scraped and relaid to form a complex, textured narrative on canvas. Each piece is a meditation on life’s cyclical nature, on the interplay between destruction and renewal, mirroring the artist’s philosophical journey from the tumult of post-revolution Iran to the tranquil shores of Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. This isn’t just an art exhibition; it’s an evolution—a daring leap into the future of sustainable creativity where each stroke of paint is not only a testament to human ingenuity but also an homage to the very earth we inhabit.

“My soul feels truly alive and connected when I paint using only natural and sustainably sourced materials from our planet,” Sassan reveals. As guests wander through the exhibition, each painting offers a portal into a different reality, one where time slows, and the soul awakens to the possibilities of a life lived in harmony with nature.

This philosophy is not just the guiding light of the artist’s creative process but also a clarion call to the art world—a world that has often been criticized for its environmental footprint. Behnam-Bakhtiar’s work is a testimony to the possibility of creating profound, impactful art without compromising our planet’s future. As the artist himself puts it, “Without this necessary change, we continue to destabilize the planetary system we rely on as human beings. The damage to our blue home mirrors that in our societies. As a creative human being, it is my duty today to push forth via my work the understanding that humanity, nature, and progress should and can coexist together.”

The synergy between Behnam-Bakhtiar’s vision and Patina Maldives’ ethos is palpable. The resort itself is a masterpiece of design and ecological balance, offering a sanctuary where the highest levels of comfort coexist with a deep respect for the natural world. It is within this context that Behnam-Bakhtiar’s “Life Energy” series truly comes to life, resonating with the very essence of the place—a place where luxury meets responsibility, where every detail is a testament to a future where humanity and nature flourish together.

“This new series focuses on enhancing the connection with the Self, mind, body, and soul,” the artist explains. “It is about bringing our energies, consciousness, and life perspectives together as one—a true step towards a necessary human evolution, and a shared core value between Patina’s ideology and the philosophy behind my own creative practice.”

With 50 percent of the proceeds from the art sale dedicated to local marine conservation efforts, this is art with a purpose—art that not only enriches the soul but also contributes to the preservation of our planet.

For those fortunate enough to witness the Life Energy exhibition, it is a transformative experience. It is a rare opportunity to engage with art that is not only beautiful but also meaningful—a reminder that true luxury lies not in excess, but in the conscious, deliberate choices we make to honor the world we live in. In a world where the lines between progress and preservation often blur, Sassan Behnam-Bakhtiar’s Life Energy series stands as a brilliant, living testament to the power of art to inspire, to heal, and to forge a new path forward. And for those who find themselves at Patina Maldives, it is a journey not to be missed. ☺

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS JACKSON