



The architect, who is Jordanian, has extensive wilderness experience. “Growing up, Petra was my backyard, and we used to climb these crazy rock formations and monoliths. The different intricacies of the architecture—literally chiseled out of the side of the mountain—really fascinated me, and I would just be blown away by it all.” Buoyed by these encounters with the built and natural environment, Alqadi channeled his love of archaeology and his design expertise into the Folly cabins: a pair of off-grid, steel-clad cabins located in the southern Californian desert. Backdropped by the mountains of Joshua Tree National Park, with the sun beating down on their rusted steel facade, the Folly cabins are informed aesthetically by their desert-red surroundings. The weather at Joshua Tree is extreme, with intensely hot summers and freezing winter temperatures. Despite this, the thick walls and pitched roofs of the insulated cabins make the location bearable year-round, protecting the cabin-dweller from the elements.

“I wanted to get back to my roots,” Alqadi says. “I thought, how interesting would it be to take something run-down and barely

standing, and turn it into an educational outlet for people to experience what off-grid living is like?” To be classified as fully off-grid, there are certain requirements which, the architect says, depend on the context of the site. “In a utilitarian way, off-grid living can be where your utilities are disconnected from the actual electric grid, and you don’t have the typical waste or water systems from the nearby municipality,” he says. “The other way of being off-grid is being able to completely pull yourself out of your context—your city, your town, or wherever, and disconnect not just physically but mentally, too.”

For Danish architect and professor Sigurd Larsen, the requirements for an off-grid site depend on what the user desires. “The most basic things people need are water and the ability to cook and make food,” he says. “Can you live without electricity? Probably, as it is part of the experience. You can set the standard of comfort yourself.” His firm has been designing modular architecture in beautiful landscapes since 2010, and it appears that culture has caught up. The architecture practice’s Løvtag Hotel is a series of three treetop cabins, the →



*“If you want to be fully off-grid, you have to figure out how to be as self-sustainable as possible.”*



The Folly cabins by Cohesion Studio reflect the unique landscape of the Joshua Tree National Park, blending indoor-outdoor living in the desert.