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## Wilson Malakkaran – Galleria Alessandra Bonomo

*Archaic and fantastic visions on straw paper: the exhibition by the Indian artist Wilson Malakkaran at the Alessandra Bonomo gallery in Rome*

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By Maria Teresa Capacchione

In progress at the Alessandra Bonomo Gallery in Rome, the exhibition of **Wilson Malakkaran** (1985), an Indian artist born in Kerala who in 2011 arrived in Rome pursuing his desire to get to know Italy.

That Italy that had fascinated him so much when, as a teenager, he had read Herbert Kubly's book "Italy". While studying the language, he found work as an assistant to the artist **Paolo W. Tamburella** - looking for a collaborator who spoke English and Hindi - and other artists. In 2017 he began working

in an apartment near Piazza del Teatro di Pompeo, transforming his bedroom into a studio, then from 2022 he obtained a space in the *Pastificio Cerere*.



Remaining in Rome during the pandemic, he began working frantically on his new work, the one we see exhibited in the Alessandra Bonomo gallery: <<The pandemic certainly affected everyone mentally>>, says Malakkaran <<I felt stuck at home and painting It was

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the only thing that helped me release the tension. When the pandemic started it felt like I couldn't move, not even be able to feel anything. It was as if I was locked inside a cage, the cage was open, but I felt bound inside. Painting helped me stay busy, it was my best stress reliever>>.

The raw material of Malakkaran is straw paper since, as a boy, in his home in Kerala he collected the the envelopes used to wrap fruit, vegetables, objects and spread them like canvases on which he made his paintings.

The same raw material that he used in the work presented here in Rome: he collected the paper that is commonly used to wrap food and objects, he spread it and painted layer after layer of color on it, creating a dialectical relationship between the brushstrokes

and the paper that gradually, as it gets soaked, wrinkles, embarks and gives the color a new depth and materiality.

The formats of his paintings are different, but always large enough for the color to express its strength. Some are cut to have geometric shapes, others follow the – irregular – shape with which the paper was laid out, still others are surrounded by a colored frame that delimits and concentrates the visual field. In some paintings, it is impossible not to find



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references to the native country, with the use of colors that recall those of the earth and Indian spices, in others we can instead find the universality of the language of painting.

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