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LIVING WITH ART

by Guy Northrop

A Work of Art

To say that 60 new oil paintings by Thanasis Fampas will go on exhibition from 5 to 9 p.m. today at the W.E.OATES Gallery, 97 North Tillman, may take some explaining. Fampas is another artist, well established in their homelands, whom Mr. Oates has "discovered" on journeys to Eastern Europe. The painter, born in Greece in 1922, has lived much of his life in Bucharest, Romania, and his art bears the mark of the cultures of both lands.

He paints figures and faces in a style akin to Byzantine, simple and forthright, but profoundly humanistic. The subject of mother and child is as old as art, but it is fresh and newly revealing in the Fampas painting, "Motherhood". The models are Fampas wife and small daughters, which may explain why he sees so clearly into their thoughts and feelings. It is a strong painting, as are all in the show, with colors which seem to have been squeezed from the earth. But in the delicate harmony and gentle line.

The wife, baby and another daughter appear frequently in this show, along with pensive peasant women, children on the seashore, and a series of goats. The atmosphere of the Mediterranean is felt in tone and texture, but even more strongly sensed is the mood of inner man and woman. Details of a figure are barely defined, but the dark slits which are eyes, the turn of a mouth, the gesture of a hand are masterfully shaped into a human being who can communicate through the ages.

Without to be the least pompous about it, Fampas discerns the nobility of mankind in the most ordinary of people.