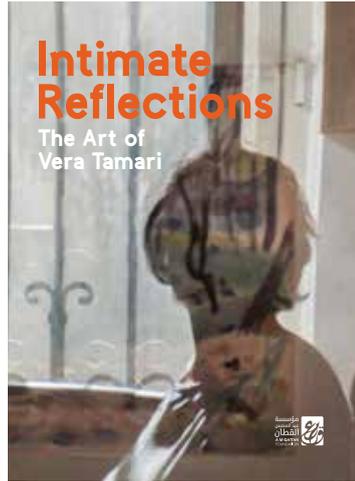




# Intimate Reflections

The Art of Vera Tamari



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*Please contact the A.M. Qattan office in Ramallah to receive a copy of the book free of charge.*

**Reviewed by Yazid Anani**

**A**fter many years of working with Vera Tamari, I was deeply moved by one particular work, and I suddenly realized what Vera as an artist represents to me. When I worked with her in 2017 in preparation for her contribution to the group exhibition *Subcontracted Nations* at the A.M. Qattan Foundation, she showed me a surprising series of images that she had captured on her iPhone on different occasions. These domestic images depicted portrait reflections of herself on multiple glass surfaces, either windows or glass framed artworks from the walls of her home. A selection of this series for our exhibition was titled *By the Window*, 2018. What moved me was one particular image in which her silhouette,

created by light from the window behind her that overlooks her garden, appeared reflected on the glass of a landscape painting by her beloved brother Vladimir Tamari, whose death she was mourning at the time. It was as if she was fusing herself inside the painting and freezing that moment of unity. The complexity of the layered lights and shadows, cast by the trees and meadows in the painting and from her inner home where her silhouette emanated, mesmerized me.

This image of her silhouette becoming eternally one with Vladimir's painting opened up for me a whole new perspective on the history of Vera's work and contribution to Palestinian art. Like the shadow of a tree in Vladimir's painting, her silhouette becomes an intricate part of the landscape of her artist's imagination, realized in much of her work through textured surfaces, intertwining curvatures, and traversed serpentine lines. She is neither solely in the painting's meadows nor at home or in her garden – she is at once in all these realms.

This is the Vera Tamari I know, an artist who lives in the background as well as in the foreground of Palestinian art, and within the material history of art and the intangible processes that constantly produce it. Vera has left a valuable imprint on the Palestinian art movement

in multiple ways – as an artist and activist, an educator and institution builder, and a mentor. Her exceptional artistic contributions have offered us a new way to look at and rethink our relationships to the environment around us, including understanding Palestinian art history from a feminist perspective. Vera has also worked laboriously in the shadows of Palestinian art, inspiring generations of artists, curators, architects, and activists who are currently shaping Palestine's art and culture, and she has been instrumental in establishing numerous institutions that support the art movement and promoting the material production of Palestinian art in the form of artworks and exhibitions.

*Intimate Reflections: The Art of Vera Tamari* is a signal witness to an important artist and to the Palestinian art movement. Through the incisive essays of the writers and in the reproduced images of Vera's own work, this book provides a new epistemological perspective on how art history is written by questioning the traditional paradigm of art objects as being the material history that narrates the story of art.

*Yazid Anani is the Director of the Public Programme at A.M. Qattan Foundation, Ramallah.*