

C I N E - L I S T

:: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16 - THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22 ::

LOCAL ONLINE SCREENINGS – New Reviews

Selma Baccar's *FATMA 75* (Tunisia)

Starting at 7pm on Thursday, October 22, the film will be available to view on Block Cinema's Vimeo page for a 24-hour period; RSVP [here](#)

In 1975, the United Nations declared its first International Women's Year, precipitating activities around the world that focused on achieving equality for women. Among the cultural contributions to the year was *FATMA 75*, the first feature-length film by a Tunisian woman, Selma Baccar. An early advocate of women's rights, Baccar began making feminist-focused films in the 1960s as a member an amateur film club for women. Using as a framing device a contemporary college student studying the role of women in Tunisian history, Baccar shows the strength and national pride of Tunisian women. For example, she uses an actor to depict a Maghrebi noblewoman who killed herself rather than capitulate to Roman rule as her male ally did. Baccar criticizes French colonial rule as well, showing a French soldier keeping a watchful, intrusive eye on the daily lives of Tunisian farmers. She tells the fascinating history of the Union of Muslim Women through an interview with one of its founders, Bchara Ben Mradis, and resurrects the work of scholar and reformer Tahar Haddad, whose book *Our Women in the Shari'a and Society* (1930) set the stage for Tunisia's modern feminist movement and the 1956 Code of Personal Status that was the country's version of an equal rights amendment. The paucity of films from Tunisia is reason enough to see *FATMA 75* in this new digital restoration by Africa in Motion, but Baccar gives audiences so much more in recounting the history of this colonized land and the women who have worked over the millennia to make it a better, more equitable homeland. (1975, 60 min) **[Marilyn Ferdinand]**

A live-streamed discussion between Professor Florence Martin, scholar of Maghrebi women's cinema, and Issrar Chamekh, a graduate student in Northwestern University's Department of Political Science, follows the film.