

Eli Zavala talks about authenticity, representation, and the importance of “giving voice to the unseen” at AFI Fest

Eli Zavala, the Mexican-born actress and producer, is pushing forward for authenticity and fighting stereotypes on the screen.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [Eli Zavala](#) aims to build a better representation of the unseen and often marginalized characters on the screen. The actress and producer is committed to “dignifying the unseen and the unrepresented” through her work.



Eli Zavala at AFI Fest. Photo: AFI/Shutterstock

Speaking at a screening of “El Carrito” at [AFI Fest](#) at the iconic Grauman's Chinese Theatre, Zavala told the audience “authentic representation is rooted in the specificity of the culture”. She added “that’s why it’s so important to have an inclusive and diverse talent portraying, and creating stories: to have the opportunity to disrupt unconscious bias and steer away from stereotypes. Cinema has that power.”

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As AFI Fest very well put it this year, we are, indeed, responsible for the stories we tell. I feel personally responsible to bring a better representation of my communities to the screen.”

Eli Zavala

Eli starred in “El Carrito” where she brought to life a street vendor named Nelly. The film is inspired in part by “Bicycle Thieves” with strong roots in the neorealism movement, and follows Nelly through another unsuccessful day of street vending in Queens, New York. Determined to improve her circumstances, she makes a risky business decision that ends in misfortune. Eli delivers a powerful

and raw performance that made the audience vibrate to the point where the film feels more like a documentary than fiction.

The multihyphenate actress said: “this year, more than ever, the AFI Fest motto landed in a personal place for me, because I totally agree: we are responsible for the stories we tell, and as a performer and a producer, I feel personally responsible to bring a better representation of my communities to the screen”.

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Eli Zavala as Nelly in El Carrito



AFI Fest 2021. Grauman's Chinese Theatre

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