

Dance With Your Heart (Tengo Talento Cuba)



Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi is a film director who graced the screen making his mark in international documentaries. His unique style blends a modern visual aesthetic with relevant content. A graduate of UC Berkeley, he received his master's degree from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Prior to graduation, the Pan-African Film Festival honored Eli with the Student Filmmaker Award for his first solo feature-length film, *Inventos: Hip Hop Cubano*. Eli continues to utilize music as a tool to provide insight into culture and socio/political community struggles. In 2010, he released his second film, *Home Grown: Hip Life in Ghana*. His current production *Revolucion Sin Muertos* "Revolution Without Death" captures a youth movement in Comuna 13 in Medellin, Colombia, where Hip Hop is utilized to empower a Peace Movement.

Capturing stories for non-profits, Eli has carved a niche working to further the missions of organizations like Ford Foundation, Leveraging Investments in Creativity Inc., Microsoft Research India, Youth Speaks, La Pena, Sol Collective Arts and Cultural Center, National Black Filmmaker Foundation and the National Institute of Culture & History in Belize. Other clients include the

Sundance Channel, Luna Productions and Ted X. His work has circulated through the National Broadcast: Free Speech TV, Teaching Channel and PBS.

Currently, Eli is curating the 8th Annual FistUp Film Festival in Berkeley, California. His dedication to his craft is deeply connected to his commitment to social justice and the belief in the transformative power of film.

Director's Statement

I am the product of a draft dodging musician and an expatriate light show artist. My parents chose that route because they believed in creating a better world. I believe the best way to have a more loving, just and compassionate society is through storytelling. That is why I became a filmmaker. I travel the world looking to be inspired, moved and pushed to become my best self. The stories I find, or sometimes find me, manifest themselves in my film festival, as well as in my personal artistic expressions.

One of my greatest missions in life is to amplify the voices of people who refuse to be silenced, ignored and cut off from the larger society. My dedication to visual art is deeply connected to my commitment to social justice and the belief in the transformative power of storytelling. I have always been attracted to stories that explore and promote healing. The field of documentary filmmaking has created a name for itself by telling devastating stories of pain and tragedy that often leave the viewer broken hearted, overwhelmed and sad. Those stories surely have their place, but I am invested in making room for uplifting stories that show ingenuity and strength in the face of adversity; films full of music and culture that leave its viewers feeling empowered and believing they can become change agents in their personal lives, their communities, and the world.

Whether I am teaching Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary American Film at UC Berkeley or presenting my work at the Zanzibar International Film Festival, I remind the audience that it is our duty to build something powerful, useful and innovative, out of what seems impossible or lacking in value. Poor and disenfranchised communities around the world don't have the same access to tell their own stories. Mainstream media has monopolized what stories get told and who gets to tell them. As the age old saying goes, "Until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." I use the platforms I have created to tell the lion's story.