

A 'rising star' comes to Vail

'The Living Wake' co-star Jesse Eisenberg to receive the Rising Star Award at this year's Vail Film Festival

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VAIL CO, COLORADO,



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Celebrating one's death while they're still alive. It's such a bizarre concept but it makes perfect sense for a beautiful, dark-comedy like "The Living Wake." In the movie a small-town eccentric, K. Roth Binew, spends his final day inviting everyone he knows to help celebrate his living wake, after which he will end his life. Jesse Eisenberg plays Binew's only friend and personal biographer, Mills Joquin, who shuttles him around town on a rickshaw and defends him from his enemy's taunts. Eisenberg's character is the yin to Binew's yang – a role that allowed him to really flex his creative muscles.

While sitting in Central Park, he took the time to answer some questions about "The Living Wake" and what winning the Vail Film Festival's Rising Star Award means to him.

Vail Daily: How did growing up in New York affect your choice to become an actor?

Jesse Eisenberg: Being in a community that fosters art and stuff, it's easier to get into the arts than, you know, than coming from the middle of the country maybe where it's kind of less convenient to do it in a professional way.

VD: What drew you to the character of Mills Joquin in "The Living Wake?"

JE: That script, I read like three pages of (it) and I thought this was a great thing ... It's so cleverly written and I thought it was so unique ... and that character is so wonderful.

VD: What was the best part about playing such a quirky character?

JE: You can do anything in a movie like that where the audience has no expectations for what the character is supposed to do because it's such a unique movie. You get to do anything as an actor because you're really in control, you know, and a lot of movies that have kind of more mainstream characters and plot lines you're at the mercy of ... those kind of specific plot points you have to hit.

VD: How long did it take to shoot the film in its entirety?

JE: Something like 20 days, which is pretty short but not atypical for a movie of that size.

VD: Did you enjoy the role of Mills more than most other film roles you've had in the past?

JE: I had more fun with that role than I've ever had 'cause it was so freeing. It was so much fun, I mean because the script was so funny and so clever so I felt like anything I could do wouldn't really screw it up that much because it was such a brilliant script.

VD: How does it feel to be the recipient of the Rising Star Award at this year's Vail Film Festival?

JE: It feels OK I think, just so I don't have to be a falling star at some point in the future when we decide it's not going as well. 'Will you be back for the Falling Star Award?' So it's an honor ... it feels great. I'm happy people are seeing that movie because it's such a unique movie ... I'm honored to receive an award I guess. High Life Writer Charlie Owen can be reached at 748-2939 or cowen@vaildaily.com.

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