



For Immediate Release —October 28, 2026

Associated Designers of Canada Awards JB Nelles the 2026 Jack King Award

Toronto, October 28, 2026 — The Associated Designers of Canada is thrilled to announce the 2026 recipient of the \$4,000 Jack King Award. The Award is presented biennially to a Canadian live performance designer in a pursuit of personal artistic development.

The jury was unanimous in selecting JB Nelles as the 2026 recipient of the Jack King Award, noting:

JB's application represents the spirit of Jack King's self-taught, multifaceted career perfectly. They have created an exciting, intensive professional development period on puppet creation and construction with a few mentors: we loved their enthusiasm for a craft in which it is difficult to find training in Canada. Taking this period of exploration will boost their knowledge and craft exponentially.

In response to their selection, JB writes:

I am honoured to be the recipient of this year's Jack King Award. I am excited to be pursuing mentorship in puppetry with Eric Woolfe at Eldritch Theatre, as well as other educational opportunities in Nova Scotia. Thank you so much to the selection committee and the ADC for making this possible.

About JB

JB Nelles (they/them) is an emerging set and costume designer currently based in Kijipuktuk (Halifax, NS). JB's work focuses on designing and building costumes and scenery for theatre, film and live performance. They enjoy using alternative materials in unconventional ways, and working to find sustainable practices to bring worlds and characters to life. JB's practice has taken them through Eastern Canada from Toronto to Newfoundland, and to Halifax where they now call home. They have worked with Neptune theatre (*Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*; *Mad Madge*; *Wizard of Oz*; *Little Shop of Horrors*), Eldritch Theatre (*Zombocalypse*; *Requiem for a Gumshoe*; *Macbeth: A Tale Told by an Idiot*), Living Edge Theatre ((*SAINT*) *JOAN*), and North Barn Theatre (*Swamp Life Parade* at Sappy Fest 2025) and the Stephenville Theatre Festival (*Legally Blonde*; *Pinocchio*; *Next to Normal*; *Sirens of Song*). JB is a graduate of York University (2020) with a BFA in Theatre with a specialization in Production and Design. After graduating, JB joined McWood Studios as a Scenic Artist where they would rapidly expand their artist skills as an artist. In 2022, JB began freelance scenic art, costume and prop work with various companies in Ontario including Crow's Theatre, Talk is Free Theatre, Capitol Theatre Port Hope, and Coal Mine Theatre. In 2025 JB was selected to participate in Out of Line, a 9 month program for Trans and Gender Non-Conforming artists hosted by the Khyber Centre for the Arts, facilitated by Marley O'Brian.



About the Jack King Award

First presented in 1992, the Award was established as a memorial to Jack King, and supports a Canadian live performance designer in a pursuit of personal artistic development - be it an apprenticeship, a period of creative exploration, or an acquisition of new skills. In 2019, the Associated Designers of Canada established a permanent endowment fund to support the Award, currently presented biannually.

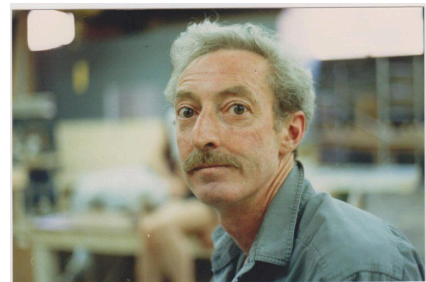


About the Jury

The jury included distinguished designers from a variety of disciplines: *Logan Cracknell; John Gzwoski; Nancy Ann Perrin; Snezana Pesic; and Michelle Ramsay.*

About Jack King

Jack King is remembered as a designer, but he was much more. His experience as an actor, director, prop maker, dyer, scenic artist, and administrator reveals itself in the depth and maturity of his work. He was largely self-taught, benefitting from every influence that came his way, from early teen-aged years at the Chatham Little Theatre to his long association with Leslie Hurry at the Stratford Festival. Throughout his career, he continued to grow as an artist, maintaining his personal style while allowing each project its own unique expression.



"... when I start a show, I settle myself down to read the play. I am imagining each character ... who they are, where they are moving, what they are wearing, where they are on the set. That is emerging in my head. In other words I am directing and acting the play as well as designing it. When I finish reading the play, I immediately scribble down my ideas, concepts, flashes of shapes ... anything that has come into my head at the first reading ... these will usually be in the finished product somewhere, although they may be greatly altered, but they have been a clue to the whole puzzle ..."

- From notes for a talk – c. 1980

Inquiries

More information is available at: <https://designers.ca/awards/>
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