The Gellard Award for Environmental Playwriting

About the Award

The Gellard Award is a juried prize for a new play focused on the environment or climate change. The award includes **$3,000 cash for the playwright**, plus a **professional public reading (with a maximum value of $2,000)** of the resulting script, produced by Neworld Theatre.

The award will be granted to one playwright per year during Neworld's 2026–27 and 2027–28 seasons.

About John Gellard

John Gellard (1940-2025) was a creative writing teacher at Kitsilano Highschool who encouraged so many students to dream, write, and find their voice. In his retirement, John dedicated a lot of his life to environmental activism.

At 15 years old, actor and playwright Pippa Mackie was lucky enough to attend a writing retreat on Gambier Island that Mr. Gellard (as he was known) created for his students. Pippa wrote a monologue that was almost banned from being published in the high school Gambier book for using the C word. John stood up for Pippa's work to the school principal and it was published after all!

John continued to champion and support Pippa (and so many other students) long after she graduated from high school and was one of the reasons Pippa felt confident she could become a playwright. Pippa's play *Hurricane Mona*, which addresses climate change, is now published with Playwrights Canada Press and it was the last show that John saw of Pippa's work.

It is for this reason and for his staunch environmental activism that Pippa has created this award in his name. To carry forward the encouragement John so openly gave to his students and provide a local playwright the opportunity to write about the environment.

Why This Award Matters to Neworld

In 2022, Neworld formally adopted Climate Action as one of our Core Values. We understand that we are living through a Climate Emergency that is the result of the patriarchal, colonial, extractivist structures that we live under. We aim to empower people and stories that positively impact our natural environment and the society we live in.

We are passionate about supporting more plays that speak to this value and are excited to partner with Pippa Mackie on this award.

Who Can Apply

Submissions are open to:

- Metro Vancouver-based playwrights only
- Emerging or established playwrights
- Playwrights interested in writing about the environment, the climate emergency, or climate action

Submission Materials

Please include the following documents in your application, all in PDF format:

1. A scene or selection of scenes

- 5–10 pages, plus
- 1–2 page outline, if possible

2. A cover letter (2 pages max) that addresses:

- Your experience as a playwright or theatre artist
- Your vision for the full production
- What excites you about this play

Application Process

- Submissions are open and received
- A jury composed by Pippa Mackie, Neworld's Artistic Director Chelsea Haberlin, Managing Director Alen Dominguez, and John's sister will read and assess submissions
- Winner is notified by mid-January 2027

How to Submit

Email your submission to **info@neworldtheatre.com** with the subject line: **GELLARD AWARD SUBMISSION** - YOUR NAME LAST NAME.

- Only PDFs will be accepted.
- Label your documents as: Script / Outline / Coverletter - YOUR NAME LAST NAME

Deadline: Wednesday, December 2, 2026, at 11:59 PM PST.