

[Vancouver sculptor creating ten-foot Pope. And Aristotle too.](#)

Posted by: Douglas Todd, August 11, 2014. 6:00 pm, The Search Section, VancouverSun.com

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Louise Solecki Weir is an artist with a spiritual and philosophical bent, busily creating a large sculpture of Pope John Paul II as well as smaller ones of Aristotle.

The North Vancouver artist recently won a cross-Canada sculpture competition to create a ten-foot high bronze monument of Pope John Paul II for the [Roman Catholic Church office](#). I don't have a photo of it, but she has already completed a bust of the pontiff for private clients (photo above).

Here's part of a recent email from Weir about the pope monument in progress:

“This sculpture of Pope John Paul II is destined to be displayed outside the John Paul II Pastoral Care Centre on 33rd and willow. It is being built in the ACME building at 112 East Hastings.

It is to be erected next year, 2015, but the date is yet to be determined.

Considering the concepts put forward by the committee, my goal is to create an engaging and life-like portrait of Pope John Paul II, one that captures his compassionate, optimistic and charismatic personality as well as his spiritual depth. It will commemorate his visit to Canada and he will be depicted at that age. Archbishop Miller worked with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican and will be a significant source of guidance for this project.

.... Working with the Catholic community, the journey for me is more about understanding and respecting their spiritual connection to Pope John Paul 2 and trying to ensure that I capture something of his character in the piece. Portraiture is about the sitter, the artist's job is to depict the subject using the techniques and talents at his or her disposal. I am touched by the confidence that is placed in me and I might be praying a little to get it right.”

In addition, Weir is working on another commission — of the philosopher, Aristotle.

The bust of the great Greek thinker (who still deserves to be read) is a response to a call from The Seymour Art Gallery in Deep Cove. That's where curator Hilary Letwin is creating an exhibition called [Dialogues with Antiquity: Contemporary Responses to Old Master Prints](#), scheduled to run from September 10th to October 18th.

Here are two of her possible approaches to Aristotle, young and old:



One Aristotle work in progress.



Another Aristotle sculpture in progress.

Here's a few remarks the sculptor made on her approach to the younger and older Aristotle, which are interpretations of images provided to her by the Deep Cove gallery:

I chose to put Aristotle in contemporary dress ... but have updated him to a tuxedo, also referring to the relevance of Aristotle in our contemporary society ... With this sculpture of Aristotle I have taken a well known historical figure and situated him in a contemporary setting using clothing. I kept the hair... it was too good.

“I chose to do a young Aristotle because:

1. Aristotle first recognized that children are different from adults and learn and experience the world differently.
2. I have training as a therapist and because the image is in profile, a profile today suggests a life story and I wanted to capture the importance of childhood.
3. Aristotle is relevant today and is “reborn” in different generations
4. ... ambiguity could be those clothes or the contemporary hoodie and tuque.
5. I love to sculpt children. They are generally beautiful and challenging. It is true to my artistic practice in which I try to capture childhood to literally and as a place of hope and optimism.”

Weir's work was also on display at the BC Sculptors' Society Summer Exhibition at Van Dusen Gardens, July 31 – August 4, says Helen Yagi.

Weir was featured along with Colleen McLaughlin Barlow, whose glass whale sculptures will be exhibited in UBC's Beaty Biodiversity Museum in autumn 2015 and Cliff Vincenzi, who is working on a large double portrait in bronze of a First Nations princess who married one of the first Italian pioneers. There were also pieces by James Fletcher, Cathi Bond, Jesse Rubin, Alex Schick, [David Walker](#) (a UBC scientist/artist and friend), plus many others.