

## The art of Robert Pope L'art de Robert Pope

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Dear Editor

I read with great interest the opinion article titled 'Humanism in Canadian medicine: from the Rockies to the Atlantic.'<sup>1</sup> Canada is strong in the medical humanities with several decades of experience in the discipline. I had initiated a medical humanities project in Nepal as part of an educational fellowship offered by the PSGFAIMER Regional Institute in Coimbatore, India. The module was later offered in the Caribbean, India, and Malaysia.<sup>2</sup>

My fellow facilitators and I extensively used the artwork by the Canadian artist, Robert Pope during our medical humanities sessions in Nepal, the Caribbean, and India. Pope's work is not limited by culture and appeals to learners in different locations. His paintings titled *Chemotherapy*, *Hug*, *Visitors*, *Mother and Son*, and *Mountain* were used by us during our modules (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> I have also used these paintings during the workshops I conduct for faculty members and students both online and onsite. Several of his works explore the world from the perspective of a patient lying on a bed.

Dr Jock Murray who had run medical humanities modules at Dalhousie University, reviewed Pope's work and he mentions about the layered realism in Pope's paintings<sup>4</sup> and how the artist referred to his paintings as 'parables of contemporary life'. His paintings have multiple layers of meaning appreciated by our participants. Robert Pope is an important artist whose work can be used to explore different aspects of healing and illness, especially cancer.



Figure 1. Robert Pope. "Visitors" Acrylic on canvas, 1989. Permission of the Robert Pope Foundation

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