

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

RYMSDYK, Jan van

Netherlands c.1720/30 – London 1790

Anatomical illustrator active in London from 1750; possibly the Jan Johansen Riemsdyk, born in Ochten, Gelderland in 1720. He worked in red chalk and pastel (although examples in the British Museum seem to be in watercolour), providing drawings for anatomical treatises by William Hunter, William Smellie (of whom Rymsdyk's portrait was engraved by Charles Grignion) and Charles Nicholas Jenty. Some pastels, executed for Jenty around 1750–55, were sold to John Fothergill; they then passed to William Shippen, who used them to teach anatomy in Philadelphia; they are now in the Pennsylvania Hospital; others are in the Royal College of Surgeons, the British Museum and the Hunterian. Between 1758 and 1764 he worked as a portraitist and drawing teacher in Bristol, but he failed to make his way and returned to London to continue as an illustrator. Rymsdyk was also a collector of old master drawings. His two sons were both miniaturists, Andrew assisting his father on Hunter's *Anatomy*; he died in Bath in 1786 (a 1779 watercolour of a boy with a spaniel is clearly inspired by Liotard's pastel of Lord Mountstuart, probably known through the 1774 engraving by J. R. Smith).

Bibliography

Stephen Asma, *Stuffed animals and pickled heads*, 2003; Bath 2002, pp. 18, 98; Edwards 1808, as Remsdyke; Oxford DNB; Don Shelton, *The real Mr Frankenstein*, 2009; Jennifer Tonkovich, "Rymsdyk's museum", *Journal of the history of collections*, xvii/2, 2005, pp. 155–71