



The Revolt on Board *La Amistad*



Death of Capt. Ferrer, the Captain of the *Amistad*, July, 1839.

Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montez, of the Island of Cuba, having purchased fifty-three slaves at Havana, recently imported from Africa, put them on board the *Amistad*, Capt. Ferrer, in order to transport them to Principe, another port on the Island of Cuba. After being out from Havana about four days, the African captives on board, in order to obtain their freedom, and return to Africa, armed themselves with cane knives, and rose upon the Captain and crew of the vessel. Capt. Ferrer and the cook of the vessel were killed; two of the crew escaped; Ruiz and Montez were made prisoners.

Death of Captain Ferrer, John Warner Barber, hand-colored woodcut engraving, 1840, The Whitney Library



Mutiny on the Amistad, Hale Woodruff, oil on canvas, c. 1941, NHM



The Revolt on Board *La Amistad*

Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast the two depictions of the rebellion on board the Amistad. Focus on each artist's use of color, composition, style, etc. portrays the incident.
2. How was the color red used in each depiction?
3. Based on your observations, how do you think each artist felt about the incident on board the Amistad?
4. What do you think was the purpose for each image in the time period in which they were made?
5. Who do you think the audience was for each image?
6. What does each image say about the African captives as they are depicted?
7. Why do you think that the rebellion on board the Amistad was revisited in 1941 by artist Hale Woodruff?



The Revolt on Board *La Amistad*

Teacher's Key

Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast the two depictions of the rebellion on board the Amistad. Focus on each artist's use of color, composition, style, etc. portrays the incident.
2. How was the color red used in each depiction?
3. Based on your observations, how do you think each artist felt about the incident on board the Amistad?
4. What do you think was the purpose for each image in the time period in which they were made?
5. Who do you think the audience was for each image?

Answer: John W. Barber's engraving served as a frontispiece of a book that he wrote in 1840 that followed the Amistad case whereas Hale Woodruff painted the scene that was eventually reproduced as a mural at Talladega College in Alabama.

6. What does each image say about the African captives as they are depicted?
7. Why do you think that the rebellion on board the Amistad was revisited in 1941 by artist Hale Woodruff?