

THE RAFT OF THE MEDUSA (1818-1819) by Théodore Géricault

Géricault was greatly influential in French artwork. Despite his early death, at age 32, he was still recognized as a leader in the Romantic Movement.



- Oil on canvas: 491 x 716 cm
- Artist recreated a tragic shipwreck that took place in 1816. One-hundred and fifty castaways would create a makeshift raft; only fifteen would actually survive the ordeal.
- Due to the deserting of the ship's captain, Géricault wanted to discredit the government.
- Géricault took parts of corpses from the Hôpital Beaujon near his workplace in order to realistically portray decaying bodies.
- The painting is full of raw emotion. At the bottom, there is a mourning father, protecting his dead son's body from cannibalistic shipmates. Half-eaten bodies are strewn across the bottom part of the image. As the viewer looks higher, up towards the peak of the artists' power-triangle, a glimpse of hope appears. The surviving castaways are stirred by the sight of a microscopic boat on the horizon.