



## THE BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN IN POPULAR CULTURE: THE SCENE OF THE STEPS

### Description

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# Cinefilia Ritrovata

Hard to tell where the original film and begins by Paolo Villaggio travesty that, thanks to the comic film The second tragic *Fantozzi* (1976) , has made a cult film without the need for it to be seen.

*The Battleship Potemkin* tells the story of the revolt of the battleship Potemkin sailors of the ship and the subsequent tragic massacre in Odessa. The rebellion reached its most dramatic point in the city staircase scene where the soldiers shoot without mercy on the population, with no distinction between men, women and children. It 'just that moment to have become iconic, not only for what he represented in film history, but above all for being reviewed by other filmmakers. The high rate of violence and tragedy of the scene, achieved thanks to a direction that does not let up and catapult the viewer into the story, has trained several directors who have not lost an opportunity to pay homage, or parodiarla, in their films.

It is not a coincidence that this is the scene that is made to recreate employed in The second tragic *Fantozzi* of Luciano Salce. The *Fantozzi* and colleagues, forced to see once again the Eisenstein film company to film club run by Professor Guidobaldo Riccardelli, driven by the same rebel *Fantozzi*, in his only moment of personal revenge, shouting proudly the most famous line fantozziana the saga "For me, the Battleship Kotiomkin is a crazy shit!". Battleship Kotiomkin because in fact the original and Salce rights were granted it created a craft parody and was renamed the name of the film and also the director (who became Sergei M. Einstein). The punishment of the employees of Megaditta for having turned against the power and destroying the copy of the film is "Dantesque" says *Fantozzi*: recreate the

sequence of the steps every Saturday afternoon until retirement age.

While in Italy The battleship has become popular for the irony that it is built around, and around the world, the Eisenstein film has often been lauded by major directors who saw in the Russian filmmaker a model to inspire them. In the film *The Prisoner of Amsterdam* (1940) by Alfred Hitchcock and *The Godfather* (1972) by Francis Ford Coppola is cited the dramatic end of old woman on the steps, struck in the eye by a saber: the glasses are broken, the look of terror and the blood line of the face. This same scene is shot, with a more parodic intent, by Woody Allen, in two films: *The Dictator of the Free State of Bananas* (1971) and *Love and War* (1975). Even in the film dystopian *Brazil* Terry Gilliam (1985) is honored the staircase of Odessa, recovering the movements of the soldiers and the fatal descent of the wheelchair.

The most heartfelt tribute and poetic of the Odessa massacre is surely to Brian De Palma in the gangster film *The Untouchables* (1987). In the middle of a shootout, in a wheelchair with a child she begins to roll down the stairs, while the mother desperate moans and the protagonist, played by Kevin Costner, try to save them, avoiding enemies' bullets. The scene keeps the dramatic atmosphere of the Eisenstein film, but moves at a slower speed, playing more about the pathos and the fate of the child: able to save themselves? Shooting and taken to the extreme, the scene of De Palma was parodied in the movie demented *Naked Gun 33 1/3 – The Final Insult* (1994) by Peter Segal: wheelchairs become three, with flights hilarious babies at the end of staircase.

Even the latest cinema and mainstream became infected from *The Battleship Potemkin*: in *Star Wars III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005) *Anakin Skywalker*, now turned to the dark side as Darth Vader, is going to carry out the massacre of young jedi, moving with a deployment of soldiers that resembles that of Soviet Odessa. The special boots leaves no doubt: the massacre in Odessa lives according to the futuristic vision and CGI George Lucas.

— **Emanuela Vignudelli**, Course of Higher Education Editor media and cross-media, courses Cineteca di Bologna



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## Category

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