



# FINDING THULE

An uncharted journey  
towards greater meaning

ROVER DREAMS PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A FILM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **SOFIA E. ROVATI**  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **IRENE MARCO** AND **JOHNNY HO** MUSIC BY **HOLLIE BUHAGIAR**  
EDITED BY **JORGE SALES TÁRREGA** ILLUSTRATED BY **FRANCESCO POIANA**  
ANIMATED BY **KELVIN CHIM**

[www.findingthule.co.uk](http://www.findingthule.co.uk)

Shooting format: digital  
Aspect ratio: 16x9  
Subtitles: English  
Audio format: 5.1, stereo  
Run time: 75 minutes  
Languages: Italian / English



*Following years of careful study, mathematician Giancarlo sets out to find the treasure hidden in Dante's Divine Comedy. Inspired by his passion, a group of scientists, truth-seekers and filmmakers Sofia E. Rovati, travel to the heart of Iceland to join him on the most anticipated expedition yet: Finding Thule.*

## SYNOPSIS

Finding Thule is a feature length documentary that tells the story of Italian engineer-turned-explorer Giancarlo Gianazza, who over several years sets out to a remote region of central Iceland on a quest to find the Holy Grail. According to his theories, mainly derived from clues he finds hidden inside the paintings of Leonardo Da Vinci, Botticelli and Raphael, the whereabouts of the treasure would be encoded in the numerical structure of the epic poem The Divine Comedy, written by Dante Alighieri between 1308 and his death in 1321.

It is in Botticelli's Primavera that Gianazza finds a striking similarity with the last 6 songs (canti) of Dante's Purgatorio - the second book of the trilogy dealing with Dante's imaginary ascent to paradise, passing through Hell and Purgatory. Gianazza takes this journey literally becoming convinced that Dante is giving the geographical coordinates of a precise location in Iceland where he travels every year since 2004 hoping to unearth a mysterious treasure: the lost treasure of the Knights Templar.

In 2014, young filmmaker Sofia E. Rovati joins Gianazza and his team with the intention of documenting the archaeological endeavor. Throughout the years the project becomes a larger-than-life adventure into which the filmmaker is inevitably drawn. Stepping in front of the camera, Sofia starts noticing and tracing parallels between her personal journey and the autobiographical journey of Dante. The lines between reality and fiction start to blur as the characters of the Divine Comedy come alive and this real-life treasure hunt in Iceland's ethereal landscape turns into a discovery of what lies within.



## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Following years of careful study, mathematician Giancarlo sets out to find the treasure hidden in Dante's Divine Comedy. Inspired by his passion, a group of scientists, truth-seekers and filmmakers Sofia E. Rovati, travel to the heart of Iceland to join him on the most anticipated expedition yet: Finding Thule.



### **SOFIA E. ROVATI (director)**

is a Milanese filmmaker, who specializes in documentary films. She lived and studied in London where she graduated with a degree in History of Art at Goldsmiths University in 2013, with a thesis on Martin Scorsese's cult movie *Taxi Driver* (1976) where she investigates the relationship between Cinema and Architecture.

Her filmmaking career begun on the movie set of the film *Antonia* (2015), directed by Italian director Ferdinando Cito Filomarino and produced by Award-winning director and producer Luca Guadagnino, director of *I am Love* (2009), *A Bigger Splash* (2015), *Call me By Your Name* (2017). On set Guadagnino noticed her and offered her to become his PA in his Milan-based film production company Frenesy Film. Sofia spent one year (2013-2014) working closely with Mr. Guadagnino, acquiring a diverse range of skills and learning from truly unique experiences, from TV commercials with great actors such as Tilda Swinton and Matthew Goode, to the pre-production of Oscar-nominated film *Call me By Your Name*, written by James Ivory, as well as the screen-writing of the film *Suspiria* (2018). She also sided Mr. Guadagnino in his role as juror in the Festa del Cinema di Roma in 2014.

In 2015, Sofia returns to London where she completes an MA degree at MET Film School. That year she starts planning the making of her very first independent film, a feature-length documentary. *FINDING THULE*, for which she successfully raises £25.000 from an online crowd-funding campaign to kick-start the project.

*FINDING THULE* is a story within a story, which starts from a group of researchers looking for a treasure hidden in Iceland and ends up telling the journey of a young girl, who after long wandering finally finds her voice and the wings to fly, discovering much more than just a golden cup.



## **JOHNNY HO (director of photography)**

was born and raised in London, Johnny graduated in 2008 from the University of Creative Arts Rochester in Photography. Whilst today predominantly working in digital, he still has a love for shooting on 35mm film and darkroom printing.

He first tasted life on set working as a Spark/Lighting Technician on Commercials, Shorts, Promos & Fashion jobs, progressing after to include Gaffer roles for clients such as Disney, Kiko, Mulberry, Versace, Canali, Rudimental, Dove & Huawei. Whilst doing this, he was also set out as a self shooter learning the transition from stills to motion. In 2015 he made the conscious decision to focus primarily on being behind the camera taking the lessons learnt in the lighting dept to aid his Lighting-Cameraman and now DP work. Ranging from short dramas to feature docs and including commercial work with clients such as Channel 4, Amazon Prime, National Theatre, Nissan, Budweiser, BMW and Google.

His journey has taken him into various often exciting working conditions around the world from the Sand Dunes of the Sahara desert to the Snowy tops of the Dolomite, to the bustling streets of South America, the heights of the peak district and the unpredictable wilderness of Iceland.

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## **HOLLIE BUHAGIAR (music composer)**

is a multi award-winning Gibraltarian composer based in London, who specialises in crafting bespoke scores for film, TV and Games. She has worked on a plethora of projects for both short and feature length films alongside Grammy and Academy Award winning engineers in the finest studios across London.

Graduating from Leeds College of Music with first-class honours in Music production, Hollie continued on to complete a Masters at the National Film and Television School.

Hollie's experience spans worldwide and includes work for the likes of Amazon, Sky, Channel 4, BFI, NOWNESS, Creative England, Tate, The Guardian, Film London, VICE and BBC. Her projects have received critical acclaim winning various prestigious awards, these include a Porsche Award, a Gold British Arrow and the McLaren Award for Best British Animation, as well as being a two time Unity Awards nominee. One of her works 'Poles Apart' won the 2018 British Short Animation BAFTA. Hollie also received the 2018 Best Composer Award at the Underwire Film Festival after having received a total of five nominations across two years. In addition to this she was nominated for the 2018 Best Sound Design Office Award with her theatre debut in 'Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties'. In 2020 she took home the Gold for Best Music Track at the LA Motion Picture Festival, the Best Music Award at the Top Indie Awards, and a nomination for Best Music at the UK Fashion Film Festival. 2021 thus far has seen her win the Best Composer Award at the Paris International Short Film Festival. Her acclaimed chamber music work for string quintet 'Astilbe' recently had its world premiere performance in Rhode Island and was then screened at the annual Hear Her Score concert. She was also honoured with Gibraltar's first ever Extraordinary Achievement Award for her work in the arts.

Hollie's latest work includes a documentary TV series soon to be aired, a commercial series for VICE and 'Black Birth' a film supported by the Tribeca film Festival and Queen Latifah. She is currently completing the feature 'Finding Thule' and is working on an upcoming film with Channel 4.

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## FRANCESCO POIANA (illustrator)

is an artist who was born in Italy in 1990, Francesco Poiana studied Painting at Accademia di Belle Arti of Rome and Fine Arts at Central Saint Martins. He joined the Royal Drawing School in 2019. The discovery and development of new techniques in printmaking and painting have become an essential part of his Master's project. He has been involved in numerous project and exhibitions including Campari Creates "N100" at the Estorick Collection and most recently, collaborating with Meseums London. Poiana's works represent an intimate voyage - towards the image of an intangible place, imagined only in daydreams.



## KELVIN CHIM (animator)

is a visual effect artist with a traditional art and design background. Since his secondary education he has been keen on exploring visual art and design. After completing a bachelor degree in new media art in Hong Kong and a master degree in digital effects at the National Film and Television School in the U.K, Kelvin began his professional career in visual effects for film and television. He has since then successfully worked on a diverse array of projects across Europe – feature films, short films, TV series, animation, music videos and commercials.



## JORGE SALES TÁRREGA (editor)

is an editor who works across fiction and documentary, with a BA in film editing from ESCAC (2011, Film university of Barcelona, Spain) and MA in post production from MET Film School (2015, Film university of London, United Kingdom). Jorge has worked as assistant editor for fiction and documentary films in different productions. After 6 years of experience as assistant editor in different companies he has been established as an editor in Barcelona. The film " Finding Thule" is his first documentary as an editor.





## ABOUT THE CAST

### **GIANCARLO GIANAZZA (researcher)**

is an engineer, art, philosophy and medieval astronomy enthusiast. He has dedicated the last seventeen years of his life to the decryption of artworks by Leonardo Da Vinci, Botticelli and Raphael, as well as to the study and decodification of the verses of Dante's Divine Comedy. He has accompanied his theoretical work with meticulous on-field research on the islands of Citera and in Iceland.

Gianazza has written a book where he reported his findings, entitled *I Custodi del Messaggio* (Sperling & Kupfer, 2006).



### **MARIA SORESINA (Dante scholar)**

was born to an Italian father and a Viennese mother. After completing compulsory education at the German Catholic school in Milan, she attends art school in Brera and later graduates with honor in Political Sciences at Università Statale in Milan in 1981, with a thesis on Karl Kraus and Vienna: 'the satire and the critic of society' with professor Francesco Alberoni.

In 1995 she publishes her first articles and gives her first lectures on Dante and the Divine Comedy. From 1998 and 2010 she is the coordinator of a book club whose primary activity is the reading and the studying of the Divine Comedy.

In 2002 she publishes her first book *Le Segrete cose: Dante tra induismo e eresie medievali*, and in 2009 her second book *Libertà va cercando. Il catarismo nella Commedia di Dante*, which will "have the role of having vigorously shaken and squandered the relationship between Dante and the Italian culture". The latter book has risen the interest of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. In 2011, her third book of Dante *Mozart come Dante. Il Flauto magico: un cammino spirituale* she draws new parallels between the journey of the Divine Comedy and the journey of Mozart's greatest opera, *The Magic Flute*. In 2020 she publishes her most recent work on Dante, entitled *E Dirò de l'altre cose ch'i' vo' scorte*.





# AN UNCHARTED JOURNEY TOWARDS GREATER MEANING

## Director's notes

The idea behind the making of FINDING THULE seemingly arrives by chance, when in 2014 I get offered the opportunity of joining Giancarlo's expedition to Iceland to document the quest. But after I travel there for the first time, I realise that that the journey I have been invited to walk is much more personal than what I thought. I become involved in this story from both an observer and both a character's point of view: there is Sofia, the director who documents Giancarlo's research with detachment, and then there is Sofia the fictional character of the film who is fully driven by the desire to find the treasure. It is from this privileged and doubled position of being both behind and in front of the camera, that I start experiencing in first person the extent to which what we call 'reality' is in fact a projection of what happens at the subtler level of the mind.

Similarly, in the epic poem The Divine Comedy Dante envisions a journey through the imaginary realms of Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise. They each represent a different state of mind, as well as the milestones of everyman's journey to Self-realisation, which from a desolate dark wood, crosses the flames of Hell and gradually rises upwards towards the stars.

The movie is structured to give the idea that there is a split between the material, physical world and the invisible, spiritual world. On the one hand, there are the men, scientists who are trying to apply their logic to unearth a buried treasure in Iceland. On the other hand, there are the women, sages and healers who believe that the treasure must be found within, in the mythical land of Thule. The two, Iceland and Thule, coexist simultaneously and yet on two different parallels which might never meet but which we can learn to perceive through the art of listening.

At the end of the adventure man and women come together in a cathartic dance, which symbolically represents the union between these two opposite yet complementary aspects: the spiritual and the material, the mind and the heart. At the end of his journey Giancarlo may have not found a physical treasure, but we get the sense that something has transformed and that although we might be leaving Iceland empty-handed, our grieving hearts are once again filled with LOVE.

It is this love the treasure that Dante ultimately wants us to find and the reason why he writes the Divine Comedy in the first place. This love is the secret message that each and one of us needs to find in order to transform our life into a paradise on earth.

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# CONTACTS

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