



MADRE DE DIOS: THE LOST ISLAND



DIRECTED BY GILLES SANTANTONIO

52' & 90'

MC4

MADRE DE DIOS: THE LOST ISLAND



SYNOPSIS

In January 2017, a team of explorers will set off to undertake one of the last geographic expeditions to be achieved on the marine isle of Madre de Dios, a true terra incognita located in the heart of Patagonia and the Chilean Antarctic. To carry out this risky exploration in one of the most remote parts of the planet, speleologists, divers, geologists, botanists and biologists will have to face extreme conditions in this unexplored land to conduct a research programme aimed at becoming a UNESCO World heritage site.



THE ISLAND AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Madre de Dios, is an island in the Magallanes Region, Chile. It is located west of the Trinidad Channel and Concepción Channel.



Madre de Dios is located at the southernmost tip of Patagonia. This windswept island is perpetually drenched by torrential rainfall. It is one of the most beautiful and hostile places on Earth. No scientific exploration has ever taken place there.

This unexplored island is a real treasure trove for scientists, especially in the field of geology, with its thousands of labyrinthine underground caves. In one of those caves called the «Cave of the whales», 2600 to 3500-year-old skeletons of whales have been discovered at 10 to 30 meters above sea level.

In another cave named Cueva del Pacifico, rock art was discovered in 2006. The indigenous Kaweskar people used to bury the dead in those caves. One skull that was unearthed dates back to 4500 years. Some caves were also used as temporary camps. Since 2008, the island has been protected as a nature reserve.



THE "ULTIMA PATAGONIA" EXPEDITION

Karstologists have always been fascinated by the landscape of the potholes and cracks shaped by the water flowing through these limestone mountains.

Led by CNRS researcher Richard Maire, an international team of thirty speleologists, geologists, karstologists, biologists and other experts from France, Chile, Spain, the USA, Canada and Australia embark on a unique expedition to explore the caves of the Isle of Madre de Dios as well as its surface.

During this expedition, the scientists hope to unveil one of the last unknown parts of our planet. Their first aim will be to study the formation of this unique landscape. They will also track down archaeological traces of an ancient people, and try to find the origins of the mysterious whalebones.



PLANNING EXPEDITION

September 18th, 2016:

Shipping of the container

January 3rd, 2017:

Start of the pre-expedition

January 10th:

Navigation to Madre de Dios

March 5th:

Press conference in Santiago de Chile

March 7th:

End of the expedition

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