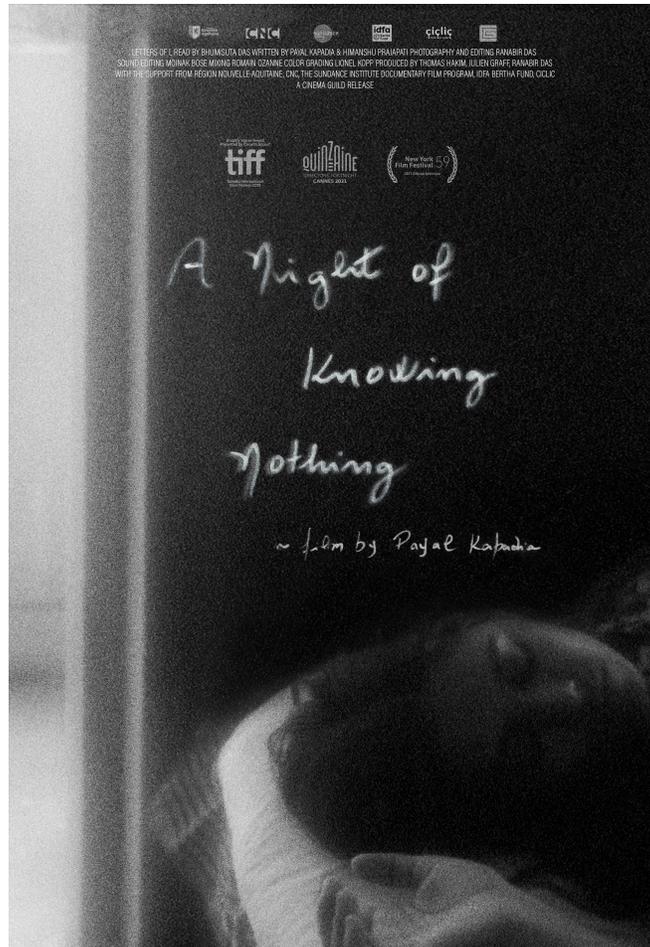


a Cinema Guild release



Opens February 11 in NYC
February 18 in select cities

2021 / 96 min / 4:3 / DCP / 2.0 / Black & White and Color
In Hindi and Bengali with English subtitles

PRESS

Qing Jin, Cinema Guild
jin@cinemaguild.com

BOOKING

Tom Sveen, Cinema Guild
tom@cinemaguild.com

The Cinema Guild, Inc.
2803 Ocean Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11229
Tel: 212.685.6242, Fax: 212.685.4717
www.cinemaguild.com

Press Materials:

http://www.cinemaguild.com/theatrical/anightofknowingnothing_press.html

SYNOPSIS

In her debut film, Payal Kapadia deftly merges reality with fiction, weaving together archival footage with student protest videos to tell the story of L, a student at the Film and Television Institute of India, writing to her estranged lover while he is away. Gradually we're immersed in the drastic changes taking place at the school and in the lives of young people across the country. *A Night Of Knowing Nothing* is a vital tapestry of the personal and the political, an essential document of contemporary India and a nostalgic look at youth fighting the injustice of their time.

CREDITS

Director	Payal Kapadia
Letters of L read by	Bhumisuta Das
Cinematography	Ranabir Das
Editing	Ranabir Das
Written by	Payal Kapadia & Himanshu Prajapati
Producers France	Thomas Hakim & Julien Graff
Producer India	Ranabir Das
Sound	Moinak Bose, Romain Ozanne
Color grading	Lionel Kopp
Drawings	Suranjay
International Sales	Square Eyes
U.S. Distribution	Cinema Guild

SELECT FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Winner - Oeil d'Or (Best Documentary), Cannes Film Festival
Winner - Amplify Voices Award, Toronto International Film Festival
Winner - Emerging Cinematic Vision Award, Camden International Film Festival
Winner - Altered States Competition, Mar del Plata Film Festival
Official Selection - New York Film Festival
Official Selection - Busan International Film Festival
Official Selection - IDFA
Official Selection - Viennale
Official Selection - FID Marseille

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We began shooting in 2017. Ranabir and I started to document life around us and through that, we started documenting our friends.

Over the years, we shot extensively—parties, birthdays, or just long afternoon naps. We were not always shure of what we were doing but because it was amongst people we knew well, the shooting process was intimate and casual.

Some time passed and there was still no real sense of what the film would be. All we had were the memories that we were collecting with our borrowed camera and sound recorder. Through these documentations and testimonies from our friends, their dreams, memories and anxieties, an image of a section of the youth began to emerge.

As we began to put some sequences together, some of our friends gave us footage that they had shot in other universities. They shot it because they had a pressing need to document, but like us, they were unsure what they wanted to do with it. We began to find more and more of such footage—rushes borrowed from friends, old family archives and virtual videos off the internet.

Our collected images became an ever-growing archive of memories—memories of the time that we had lived and witnessed. Soon, even the footage we had shot began to feel as if it were 'found,' perhaps as a time capsule of our own past. We began to devise a narrative to connect all of these seemingly unrelated images.

The narrative we chose was a love story. Love in India is often wrought with caste, class and religious differences. The film finds its form in letters, written by a young woman at the university to her estranged lover. They have been separated by his parents who don't approve of their relationship. Through these letters that span many years, we get a sense of a section of the youth who are caught in both personal struggles as well as larger social struggles, as they deal with the drastic changes that take place around them. Perhaps this is why we chose the title, *A Night of Knowing Nothing*. It's like a long, unpredictable night, where we are all in the dark on what to expect next. The title was also 'found' on the walls of a university, scribbled under a flickering tube light by an unknown poet.

The film uses an amorphous form, grainy, black and white footage that creates a sense of nostalgia. But it is not nostalgia for the past, because in now way do we believe that the past was better. It is nostalgia for the present—our current times that have forced many of us to respond to the circumstances around us. Maybe it is a nostalgia for the romantic ideal of being young and conscientious—to fight for a more fair and equal society.

A Night of Knowing Nothing is our homage to the public university system in India For centuries, certain sections of Indian society have been denied access to education. The public university system was designed to correct these historical wrongs. Although it may not have always succeeded in doing so, as caste and other discriminations still exist within its inherent structures, public universities still potentially provide spaces for true freedom, both physical and intellectual, where nothing is sacrosanct and everything needs to be questioned. This is

the freedom that we need to strive for, for the future generations to come so that young people who have access to it can free themselves from the society that binds them.

The film is a long dream, told from the point of view of a gentle, feminine voice.

-Payal Kapadia

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Payal Kapadia is a Mumbai-based filmmaker and artist. She studies Film Direction at the Film & Television Institute of India. Her short films *Afternoon Clouds* and *And What is the Summer Saying* premiered respectively at the Cinéfondation and the Berlinale. She is a Berlinale Talents alumna and participated in 2019 at the Cinéfondation—Résidence du Festival de Cannes.

Her first feature length film, *A Night of Knowing Nothing*, was selected for Director's Fortnight, Cannes 2021, where it won the Golden Eye Prize for Best Documentary. Her next project, *All We Imagine As Light*, which received support from CICLIC, Hubert Bals Fund & PJLF Arts Fund, is currently in development.