



**Abramorama Acquires Worldwide Rights to  
*The Test & The Art of Thinking* by  
Director Michael Arlen Davis**

*Film to Have U.S. Theatrical Premiere April 27*

**New York, NY — March 12, 2017 — Abramorama** has acquired worldwide rights to ***The Test & The Art of Thinking***, a documentary feature directed by **Michael Arlen Davis** (*Martha & Ethel, Hats Off*) and produced by Davis and **Jyll Johnstone** (*Martha & Ethel, Throwing Curves: Eva Zeisel, Hats Off*). The film explores the debate over the SAT and ACT exams from a wide array of perspectives. While more than 3 million high school students take these college entrance exams annually, there have been growing questions about exactly what these tests measure, what role they play in the admissions process, and how predictive they are of academic success. Davis interviews students, parents, counselors, test-prep professionals, and academics to focus on this uniquely American rite of passage and how it reflects deeper issues in our educational system — and society as a whole.

***The Test & The Art of Thinking*** will open on April 27 in New York at the Landmark at 57 West and on May 4 in Los Angeles at the Laemmle Music Hall. A national release in select cities across the U.S. will follow.

“We spent three years researching this controversial subject, assessing its broad reach and impact, while meeting and speaking with many of its most prominent constituents,” said **Michael Arlen Davis**, the director. “Those flummoxed by these tests can hopefully find some useful context, if not solace, in the film. And we are thrilled to be working again with the Abramorama team, as their depth of skill is so finely attuned to this project.”

### **More About the Film**

For American high-schoolers entering the pressure-cooker world of college admissions, the SAT and ACT exams (referred here interchangeably and collectively as “the tests”) are high-stakes crucibles with the potential to dramatically influence the trajectory of one’s academic or even professional life. Painfully aware that many highly ranked colleges rely on “the tests” in assessing applicants, students and their families feel compelled to spend often scarce time and money on test-prep services. But despite the emphasis placed on the exams, experts have long questioned their usefulness as a gauge of academic promise and what — if anything — they measure or uniquely bring to the college admissions table.

In the fascinating documentary feature ***The Test & the Art of Thinking***, filmmaker Michael Arlen Davis explores the debate over these exams from a wide array of perspectives. From students giving up their Sundays to learn arcane test-taking techniques to university administrators bemoaning the vicious cycle created by test scores and college rankings, Davis reveals the profound and mostly unseen impact the SAT and ACT have, deep into our educational system.

Pulling back the curtain of the ballooning test-prep industry, Davis introduces us to a variety of coaching stars. Among them is Greg Hanlon, a white-bearded SAT guru with an unorthodox if highly effective tutoring style and Steven Ma, CEO of ThinkTank Learning, a sharp entrepreneur whose clients pay up to a million dollars for a money-back guarantee of admission to the college of their choice. Serving as the film's Greek chorus is a roundtable of testing professionals who are well aware of the exams' shortcomings and seem as perplexed as anyone that their lucrative field continues to grow unabated.

Through interviews with dozens of students across a wide socio-economic spectrum as well as parents, teachers, and professionals, ***The Test & the Art of Thinking*** paints an engrossing picture of a distinctly American rite of passage. As viewers, we discover that 'the tests,' despite their well-documented flaws, now threaten to pull even more into their orbit the resources and direction of the standard high school curriculum. At the same time, their unspoken encouragement of a gamer's skill evokes a Wall Street ethos and its longstanding connection to the elite universities that introduced the SAT nearly a century ago.

**Media Contact:** Julia Pacetti, JMP Verdant — [julia@jmpverdant.com](mailto:julia@jmpverdant.com) — [\(718\) 399-0400](tel:7183990400)

For more information on the film, please visit: [thetestdoc.org](http://thetestdoc.org)

Follow [@abramorama](https://twitter.com/abramorama)  
[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

## **About The Filmmakers**

### **Michael Arlen Davis (Director, Producer)**

Michael Arlen Davis has served as the vice president of Canobie Films since its formation in 1992. He was a producer on the company's 2008 documentary *Hats Off*, a profile of 93-year-old New York actress Mimi Weddell, which was also released by Abramorama. He also served as assistant producer on 1994 Sundance Grand Jury Prize nominee *Martha & Ethel*, a portrait of the nannies who raised filmmakers Jyll Johnstone and Barbara Ettinger.

### **Jyll Johnstone (Co-Producer)**

Jyll Johnstone is president of Canobie Films, the banner under which she has been directing and producing documentaries since 1993. As a filmmaker, Johnstone focuses her attention on talented, passionate and driven women who pursue success despite improbable odds. Her documentaries *Martha & Ethel*, *Throwing Curves: Eva Zeisel*, and *Hats Off* have been featured

at the Sundance, Telluride, Palm Springs, Toronto, San Francisco, Bologna, London and Hong Kong film festivals, as well as a variety of museums. *Martha & Ethel* received a nomination for the Grand Jury Prize at the 1994 Sundance Film Festival and also received a nomination for the DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary. Johnstone is currently directing *Queen of Belvedere*, a documentary about an elderly El Salvadoran housekeeper laboring in the homes of an affluent San Francisco suburb. She is also directing "BeMused," a TV docu-series about the life, work and struggles of New York artist Libby Schoettle.

### **About Abramorama**

Abramorama is the preeminent global rights management partner for music films today and is recognized for the consistent high quality of its work on award-winning feature films. An innovator in the focused, personalized form of film distribution and event cinema, Abramorama provides invaluable alternatives to filmmakers and content owners. An industry leader in marketing, promotion, and global distribution, Abramorama continues to trail-blaze exciting new pathways for filmmakers to find their audience.

Over the course of more than 15 years, Abramorama has successfully distributed and marketed hundreds of films, including Ron Howard's Grammy Award®-winning *The Beatles: Eight Days A Week – The Touring Years*; Danny Clinch and Pearl Jam's *Lets Play Two*; Amir Bar-Lev's *Long Strange Trip – The Untold Story of the Grateful Dead*; Corbett Redford and Green Day's *Turn It Around: The Story of East Bay Punk*, John Scheinfeld's *Chasing Trane – The John Coltrane Documentary*; Sam Pollard's *Two Trains Runnin'*; Brett Bern's *BANG! The Bert Berns Story*; Brett Morgen and National Geographic's seminal *Jane*; Tomer Heymann's *Mr. Gaga*; Charles Ferguson's *Time To Choose*; Asif Kapadia's *Senna*; Neil Young's *Greendale*; Cameron Crowe's *Pearl Jam Twenty*; Sacha Gervasi's *Anvil! The Story of Anvil*; Banksy's Academy Award® nominated *Exit Through the Gift Shop*; the surprise indie hit *Awake: The Life of Yogananda*; Laurie Anderson's astonishing New York Times critics' pick, *Heart of a Dog*, Showtime's National Board of Review Winner *Listen to Me Marlon* and Draft House Releasing's 2016 Documentary Academy Award®-nominee and IDA Best Documentary Winner *The Look of Silence*. Abramorama is a founding partner of *The Seventh Art Stand* program, an act of cinematic solidarity against Islamophobia, that ran in more than 50 theaters across the United States in May of 2017. For more information visit [www.abramorama.com](http://www.abramorama.com)

**The Test & The Art of Thinking** (2017, U.S., 85 min) Directed by Michael Arlen Davis. Produced by Michael Arlen Davis, Jyll Johnstone. Co-Produced by Sherry Daniel. Cinematography by Nick Blair, Chikara Montomura. Music by Joel Goodman. Edited by Tom Christopher, Sherry Daniel, Ken Schneider, Jesse Spencer, Paul Zehrer. Consulting Producer: Paul Zehrer. Research by Matthew O'Connor. Graphics and Animation by Bay Area Film Company. Audio Post Production Berkeley Sound Artists, Jim LeBrecht. In English. An Abramorama release.

###