



# A Thousand Miles AND COUNTING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCAD PRESENTS

## *A Thousand Miles and Counting*

The short documentary honors the legacy of William and Ellen Craft

### MEDIA CONTACT

#### JJ Maxwell

Executive Director  
of PR & Marketing  
jmaxwell@scad.edu

#### Michelle Gavin

Executive Director  
of Communications  
mgavin@scad.edu

**SAVANNAH, GEORGIA-** The Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) honors two important figures in American history in *A Thousand Miles and Counting*, a SCAD-produced short film documentary that celebrates William and Ellen Craft and their daring escape from slavery. The film includes historical language and depictions of the enslavement of Black people in the United States. By acknowledging and providing context for this history, SCAD seeks to play a key role in ensuring a just, equitable, and inclusive future.

In 1848, the Crafts, an enslaved African-American couple, escaped from their enslavers in Macon, Georgia, to embark on a perilous four-day journey to the Northern free states. To make their escape, the couple devised a plan: Ellen, who could pass as a white person because of her lighter skin, would disguise herself as a deaf, male slave owner, and William as her enslaved person. Upon completing the first stage of their journey, the Crafts arrived in Savannah, passing through the Central of Georgia Railway depot — the very place where the SCAD Museum of Art stands today. Safe passage through Savannah was the first divination of their successful journey, one that would ultimately land them in England in search of refuge.

ever heard. In 1848, they courageously escaped slavery and upended societal conventions of race, gender, and class in their 1,000-mile journey to freedom. Their travels, soon after escaping, remarkably landed them at the very site of today's SCAD Museum of Art, and they lived in their final years nearby. We honor them as exemplars of many people who bravely and creatively changed their fate."

The eight-minute documentary is based on the book *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, a written account by William and Ellen Craft, first published in 1860. More than a dozen SCAD alumni contributed to the documentary, narrated by Carl Crudup and told by Craft family descendants Gail DeCosta, Peggy Trotter Dammond Preacely, Vicki Davis Williams, along with Dr. Walter O. Evans, a member of the SCAD Board of Visitors and benefactor of the SCAD Museum of Art's Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art, and Joël Díaz, the director of the Evans Center for African American Studies.

Dr. Evans originally shared the story of the Crafts with Wallace during the SCAD Museum of Art's expansion in 2011. In 2016, SCAD commissioned and installed a commemorative bronze medallion — designed by SCAD graduate and foundation studies professor Andrew MacDonald (M.F.A., illustration, 2014) — in the lobby of the SCAD Museum of Art, to elucidate the Crafts' remarkable feat.

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SCAD President and Founder Paula Wallace said, "The dramatic, real-life story of William and Ellen Craft is one of the most powerful I have

SCAD Museum of Art's Evans Center for African American Studies has partnered with the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System to share the Craft story with students in Savannah for a community-engaged learning experience. In this two-part experience, SCAD Museum of Art will host an hour-long film screening and contextual conversation in SCCPSS schools, followed by a 90-minute tour and workshop at SCAD MOA to learn about elements discussed in the film: legacies of enslavement; historical preservation; and the importance of advocacy and activism. The university is excited to expand this initiative to other regional and national school systems in the future.

"I want to thank SCAD President Paula Wallace, Dr. Walter Evans, and the Savannah College of

Art and Design for helping keep the amazing story of our ancestors alive and available to the public through this new educational film," said Peggy Trotter Dammond Precely, activist, poet, and great-great granddaughter of the Crafts. "As descendants of Ellen and William Craft, we are proud that we have continued to honor their legacy in the work we do as teachers, activists, preservationists, entrepreneurs, health professionals, civic leaders, social workers, architects, laborers, artists, businesspeople, filmmakers, poets, journalists, students, professors, oral historians, parents, and grandparents."

*A Thousand Miles and Counting* is currently on view at the SCAD Museum of Art. For more information, visit [scadmoa.org/crafts](https://scadmoa.org/crafts).



#### SCAD MUSEUM OF ART

The SCAD Museum of Art is a premier contemporary art museum that includes more than 10 dynamic gallery spaces featuring exhibitions and commissioned works by international emerging and established artists. As a teaching museum, it serves visitors and students alike with the twin goals of enriching both the high caliber of education at SCAD and the cultural life of the Savannah community and beyond.

Established in 2011, SCAD MOA's Evans Center for African American Studies features permanent gallery space dedicated to exhibiting the work of contemporary Black artists. In the decade since its founding, the Evans Center and SCAD MOA have continually exhibited and celebrated Black artists, including internationally heralded exhibitions focused on the legacies of Jacob Lawrence and Frederick Douglass, as well as contemporary exhibitions by artists including Hank Willis Thomas, Toyin Ojih Odutola, and Kenturah Davis. Visit [scadmoa.org](https://scadmoa.org).

#### SCAD: THE UNIVERSITY FOR CREATIVE CAREERS

The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited university, offering more than 100 academic degree programs in more than 40 majors across its locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Lacoste, France; and online via SCAD eLearning and SCADnow.

SCAD enrolls approximately 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 100 countries. The innovative SCAD curriculum engages professional-level technology and other advanced learning resources, and affords students opportunities for internships, professional certifications, and real-world assignments with corporate partners through SCADpro, the university's renowned research lab and prototype generator. In 2020, the prestigious Red Dot Design Rankings placed SCAD as the No. 1 university in the U.S. and in the top 2 universities in the Americas and Europe for the fourth consecutive year. Career preparation is woven into every fiber of the university, resulting in a superior alumni employment rate. In a recent study, 99% of SCAD graduates were employed, pursuing further education, or both within 10 months of graduation. SCAD provides students and alumni with ongoing career support through personal coaching, alumni programs, a professional presentation studio, and more. Visit [scad.edu](https://scad.edu).