

## PRESS RELEASE

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## Belwin Partners with MAAHMG To Award Artist Residencies

*Belwin Conservancy is Partnering with the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery (MAAHMG) to Offer Residencies to Whitney Terrill (left) and Tomas Alvarez (right)*

**Afton, Minn.** — Belwin Conservancy is partnering with Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery (MAAHMG) for a new residency program for two local Black artists interested in connecting with nature and creating art while experiencing the beauty of the outdoors. Artists Tomas Alvarez and Whitney Terrill have been awarded these residencies, which will run from June 1st through June 30th, 2023.

“We believe nature belongs to everyone and we are seeking to change the narrative that Black people ‘don’t do the outdoors,’” states Tina Burnside, co-founder and curator of MAAHMG. “We hope this residency will play a role in Blacks reclaiming outdoor spaces.”

Alvarez and Terrill will enjoy a shared private studio space at Belwin for their residency for study, work, meditation and creating art. The two artists will have access to 240 acres of woodlands, oak savannas, wetlands and prairies to explore for inspiration. They will also have access to Belwin staff to learn about land restoration.

Both artists are local to the region and connect nature and art. Originally from Minneapolis, Whitney Terrill is a Minnesota artist focusing on painting, photography, and printmaking. She connects important topics to her, such as environmental justice, gender, faith, the environment, and African heritage. Terrill also enjoys engaging in public art, such as murals, to raise awareness about environmental justice.

Tomas Alvarez is also from Minnesota. "Photography has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of my life," Alvarez writes, "leaving an indelible mark in countless ways. Delve into my portfolio of landscape images, and you'll discover a distinctive style that seamlessly merges artistic vision with a profound reverence for the natural world. Each photograph tells a story, encapsulating the breathtaking beauty that surrounds us."

The residencies include \$1500 stipends for Alvarez and Terrill, and no requirement that the artists produce artwork by the end of the residency. The creation of new work is encouraged, but not required.

Belwin has a long history of hosting artists-in-residence, including sculptor Tom Bierlein in 2021 or poet Laurie Allmann in 2016. However, this is the first time Belwin has partnered with an outside organization for a residency. "We are thrilled to have Whitney and Tomas at Belwin!" says Susan Haugh, Program Director. "We can't wait to see what these fabulous artists create, influenced by their experience at Belwin and how their work connects their audiences with nature. A very special thank you to MAAHMG co-founders Coventry Royster Cowens and Tina Burnside."

After the residencies finish, Alvarez and Terrill will give artist talks at Belwin and at MAAHMG about their experience, which will be open to the public. Please follow us on social media or at [belwin.org](http://belwin.org) to keep up with details about these events.

To follow the artists, visit [@whitney.terrill](https://www.instagram.com/whitney.terrill) on Instagram or go to [tomalvarez.com](http://tomalvarez.com).

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## **About Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery (MAAHMG)**

The [Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery](#) (MAAHMG) preserves, documents and highlights the achievements, contributions and experiences of African Americans in Minnesota. This mission is carried out through exhibits, programs and events that educate and inform the public about the history, culture, and art of African Americans in Minnesota. Opened in 2018, the museum is also a community gathering place where people meet and celebrate Black history. The museum is free and accessible to all.

## **About Belwin Conservancy**

[Belwin Conservancy](#) is a nonprofit organization with a mission of inspiring connection and engagement with the natural world. At Belwin, we spark passion for wild places through a variety of innovative experiential programs that include the arts, astronomy, athletic fields, bison, education, and public access to our restored lands. Through land protection and habitat restoration, we revive threatened ecosystems so wildlife can thrive for generations to come. Located in Afton, Minnesota, on the ancestral home of the Wahpekute Dakota people, Belwin's 1,500 acres of permanently protected land includes woodland, prairie, oak savanna, ponds, streams, and wetlands.