

Kofi Bazzell-Smith
Artist | Educator | Professional Boxer | U.S.- Japan Bridging Scholar
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www.kofimanga.com

Future Faculty Fellow *The Rochester Institute of Technology* 2024-

First Professor of Japanese Manga practice in the United States

University of Illinois *Master of Fine Arts in New Media*; 2021-2024

Created an international residency for Japanese Artist Kazuo Maekawa via a \$15,000 grant 2023

Curated an international manga exhibition via Mellon Humanities fellowship 2023

Independent Research in Japan 5/2023-6/2023 and 8/2022-9/2022

Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellow 2023-24 (\$10,000)

Humanities Research Institute Mellon Foundation Interseminars Fellow 2022-23 (\$35,000)

FLAS Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellow – Japanese 2021-22 (\$15,000)

Eastern Illinois University 2021; *BA in Studio Art, Asian Studies Minor*

Magna Cum Laude; Founder/President Japanese Culture Club; Independent Studies in Japanese, Mandarin, Drawing, Painting, and Digital art; Completed Chinese language program;

Study Abroad Student of the Year; Two Studies Abroad in Japan

Virtual Study Abroad; Advanced Japanese 2021 *Osaka Gakuin University*

Study Abroad; Japanese Language Courses, Manga Course; Hirakata, Japan 2019 *Kansai Gaidai*

Parkland Community College *Associate's in General Studies*, August 2018

Publications

"Karasu" in "Interseminars: Speculation and Imagining Otherwise." An academic book produced during the interdisciplinary fellowship sponsored by the Mellon Foundation

University of Illinois Humanities Research Institute 2023

4 Pages | 16 Bars: A Visual Mixtape *Black Comics Anthology* 2021

Azuki Self-published Children's Book Series 2018-2020

Jiyu manga anthology with *Kansai Gaidai University* 2019

Courses Taught

Manga Production (Studio) *Rochester Institute of Technology* 2024

Manga Production (Studio) *University of Illinois* 2024, 2023, 2022

Illustration: Composition and Storytelling *University of Illinois* 2023

Art for non-majors (Studio); Instructor *University of Illinois* 2022

English as a Second Language *Teaching Internship* 2019 *TLC (The Language Company)*

Selected *Visiting Lectures*

Commencement Speech *Kansai Gaidai University Asian Studies Program Graduation 2024*
Artist Talk Comics Studies Society 2024
Developing a Global Practice *Musashi University (Japan) 2023*
Networking Between the US and Japan *Aoyama Gakuin University (Japan) 2023*
Visual Communication *University of California Los Angeles 2023*
Historical Context and Idiosyncrasies of Japanese Manga *Auburn University 2023*
Intersections between art practice and engagement *Auburn University 2023*
Art Composition (*In Japanese*) *Middlebury College Advanced Japanese Course 2022*
Introduction to Manga *Illinois Wesleyan University 2022*
Conveying movement in Sequential Art *University of California Los Angeles 2022*
Networking in Japan Central *Connecticut State University 2022*
Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement *Murray State University 2022*
Networking Lecture for Art Education Ph.D. students *University of Illinois 2022*
Creating a Global Career *Parkland College 2022*
TEDx Talk *University of Illinois at Chicago 2021*
Artist Talk *Edison Middle School 2021*
Artist Talk for Black History Month, Black Joy *Metcalfe Middle School 2021*

Workshops

Manga Drawing and Storytelling Workshop *High Museum of Art Atlanta 2023*
Manga and Boxing Workshops (*in Japanese*)
Middlebury College Summer Intensive Language Program Japanese School 2023
Manga Drawing and Storytelling Workshop *University of California Los Angeles 2023*
Comic Paneling & Composition Workshops *Auburn University Art Department 2023*
Public Manga Workshop *Auburn University 2023*
Manga Storytelling Workshop *University of Texas at Austin 2023*
Manga Drawing and Storytelling Workshop *Museum of Design Atlanta 2022*
Public Manga Workshop University YMCA *University of Illinois 2021*
Small Press Fest! Manga Storytelling Workshop *University of Illinois 2021*
Manga Workshop for ELL students *Urbana High School 2021*
Manga Storytelling Workshop 2019 *Urbana Free Library*
East Asian Languages Workshop *Eastern Illinois University 2018*
Manga Storytelling Workshop *Eastern Illinois University 2018*
Manga Storytelling Workshop *Parkland College 2018*

Panel Discussions

National Collegiate Honors Council Conference *Chicago 2023*
[Melanated and Animated](#): Black and Japanese Cross-Cultural Connections
Japanese Arts Foundation & Logan Theatre in Chicago 2023
Discussion on the Japanese manga industry with Kazuo Maekawa *C2E2 2023*
Guest Speaker Japanese Language Festival for *Japan-America Society of Washington 2023*
"I-as-We" Comics 2023 BIPOC POP Comics and Multimedia Symposium *UT Austin 2023*
Global Forms and Ancestral Identities BIPOC POP Symposium *UT Austin 2022*
Anime and Manga: Black Intersections with Japanese Culture

US-Japan Bridging Foundation 2020

Panel on James Baldwin with Dr. Eddie Glaude Jr. *2020 University of Illinois*
Artist Talk *University of Illinois East Asian Languages and Cultures Department 2020*
Poetry reading and discussion *UNESCO Center for Global Citizenship 2020*
Sounds Like Community; Artist Talk *Urbana Independent Media Center 2020*
James Baldwin Commemoration Panel *Champaign-Urbana 2020*
International Engagement *UIUC International and Area Studies Library 2019*

Residencies

McGuire Artist in Residence at The Blake School, Minneapolis MN 2024
Summer Art Camp *High Museum of Art Atlanta 2023*
Visiting Faculty Residency *Middlebury College Intensive Summer Japanese Program 2023*
Visiting Scholar Residency *University of California Los Angeles 2023*
Artist in Residence *Auburn University Art and Art History Department 2023*
Visiting Faculty Residency *Middlebury College 2022*

Service to the University of Illinois

Manga Workshop at *Main Library 2024*
Organizer, host, and Japanese-English interpreter for multiple lectures and workshops
Kazuo Maekawa Visiting Artist Residency 2023
Curated student Illustration Exhibition *Playful By Design Symposium 2024-23*
Organizer/Exhibitor/Panelist: Interseminars Initiative Interdisciplinary Symposium
University of Illinois Humanities Research Institute 2023
Graduate Student Advisory Representative *Art&Design 2022-23*
Artist Talk, Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement *University YMCA 2022*
Panel Discussion, Decolonizing Art Education and Professional Development
Krannert Performing Arts Center 2022
Public Artist Talk/Critique, Azuki Manga Series *2022*
Artist Talk, *Asian American Cultural Center 2021*
Artist Talk *Japan House at University of Illinois 2021*
Artist Talk *University of Illinois Graphic Design Department 2021*
BIPOC Liberation Fest *University of Illinois 2021*
English Conversation Partner Volunteer 2010-15 *Intensive English Institute*

Service to Eastern Illinois University

Founder/President Japanese Culture Club *2018-2021*
International Education Committee member *2020-21*
Artist Talk; Power Talks: Visual Storytelling *2020*
Asian Studies Conference Presentation *2019*
Global Cultural Night (International student performances and awards) Emcee *2018*
Public reading in Mandarin for Christmas at Tarble Center *2018*

Press

[Illinois Public Media Interview 2024](#)
[University of Illinois News Bureau 2024](#)
[Black Experience Japan Interview 2023](#)
[Fuji Television Japanese National TV interview 2023](#)
[Auburn University Residency Interview 2023](#)
[HYFIN Interview Anime, Art, Beats & Sake: The Intersection of Black and Japanese Culture 2023](#)
[WCIA Channel 3 Artist Interview 2022](#)
[Fuji Television Japanese National TV interview 2022](#)
[Shining Otaku Podcast 2022](#)
[Subsume Media Black Futures Month 2022](#)
Comics Talk podcast 2022
[Professor LatinX Comics Scholars Channel 2020](#)
[Japan Station Podcast 2020](#)
[Harukana Show \(Japanese radio station\) 2019/2020](#)
[Young, Gifted and Abroad 2020](#)
Smile Politely Artist Interview 2020
Unity in Action Magazine 2020

Exhibitions

MFA Show *The Krannert Art Museum University of Illinois 2024*
Turning To The East: Intersecting Afro-Asian Connections in a Multipolar World
Amelie A. Wallace Gallery SUNY Old Westbury 2024
Group Show at *The Blake School, Minneapolis MN 2024*
Curator/Participant in group show: Drawing Bridges: An International Manga Showcase
University of Illinois Humanities Research Institute -funded by Mellon Foundation 2023
Solo Animation Exhibition *Design Festa Gallery Tokyo, Japan 2023*
Solo Animation Exhibition *Anime Central Convention in Chicago, Illinois 2023*
Solo Digital Exhibition *Auburn University Technology and Innovation Center 2023*
Art Show *Analog Wine Library Urbana, Illinois 2023*
Solo Exhibition *Uncanny Juxtapositions McKinley Foundation Champaign, Illinois 2023*
Solo Exhibition; *Azuki the Rock Paper Scissors Champion University of Illinois YMCA 2022*
Future Spaces in Community Places group exhibition *Murray State University 2022*
Future Spaces in Community Places group exhibition *Illinois Wesleyan University 2022*
8 to Create Live Drawing Exhibition *University of Illinois Art + Design 2021*
Research and Creative Works Conference *Eastern Illinois University 2020-21*
Black Lives Matter Outdoor Installation *Common Ground Food Co-op 2020*
Illinois Board of Higher Education Annual Gallery 2019
Solo Exhibition for Asian Heritage Month *Booth Library Eastern Illinois University 2019*
Solo Exhibition *Eastern Illinois University Passage Gallery 2019*
Solo Exhibition *Independent Media Center 2018-2019*
Boneyard Arts Festival 2017
C-U Changemakers Solo Art Exhibition 2016

Awards

Fulbright Semifinalist 2024
Coyne Family Foundation Illustration Award *AIGA Scholarship 2023* (\$3000)
Inaugural Frederick Luis Aldama Leadership Award *Comics Studies Society 2023* (\$500)
Future Faculty Career Exploration Program Fellowship *Rochester Institute of Technology 2023*
Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship *Fine and Applied Arts University of Illinois 2023* (\$10,000)
George A Miller Visiting Artist Grant 2023(Kazuo Maekawa from Tokyo)-
University of Illinois Center for Advanced Studies (\$15,000)
Visiting Artist Grant 2023 (Maekawa residency) *Art&Design University of Illinois* (\$500)
Graduate Spring Event Travel Competition *University of Illinois* \$500
Mellon Foundation Interseminars Initiative Fellowship, 2022-23
Humanities Research Institute, University of Illinois (\$35,000)
Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students 2024-2023-2022 *University of Illinois*
Fulbright Semifinalist Japan 2023
Fulbright Alternate Japan 2022
Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship 2021-22
Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures University of Illinois (\$15,000)
Graduate Image of Research Award Honorable Mention 2022 *University of Illinois*
Fulbright Semi-Finalist Japan 2021
AIGA Worldstudio scholarship 2021 (\$500)
Magna Cum Laude EIU 2021
All Student Show Digital Art 1st Place 2021/2020 *Eastern Illinois University*
Undergraduate Research Grant 2021/2020 *Eastern Illinois University*
Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship 2020 *Eastern Illinois University* (\$5000)
Study Abroad Student of the Year 2020 *Eastern Illinois University*
Talented Student Award Art Department 2019/2020 *Eastern Illinois University* (\$1000)
U.S.-Japan Bridging Foundation Scholarship 2019 (\$2500)
Freeman Asia Scholarship 2019 (\$2500)
Talented Student Award Study Abroad 2019 *Eastern Illinois University* (\$1000)
Asian Studies Leadership Award 2019 *Eastern Illinois University*
Asian Studies Research/Creative Work Award 2019 *Eastern Illinois University*
Manga Award *Midwest Animation Promotion Society 2019* (\$3000)