

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

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)

Graduate Coursework: The Art of Physics/Physics of Art, Japanese Cinema, Japanese 440-441,
Word and Image in Chinese Art, Contemp. theory 593/595, ARTS 591 Interdisciplinary Seminar

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); Instructor *University of Illinois 2024*

Illustration: Composition and Storytelling *University of Illinois 2023*

Manga Production (Studio); Instructor *University of Illinois 2023*

Manga Production (Studio); Instructor *University of Illinois 2022*

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

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

Visiting Lectures

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*
Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement *Nihon Manga Juku (Japan) 2022*
Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement *Bunsei University of Art (Japan) 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*
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
Co-presenter with producer of Afro Samurai Eric Calderon *US-Japan Bridging Foundation 2020*
Panel on James Baldwin with Princeton Scholar 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*
TOMODACHI Generation Summit Conference *Showa Women's University 2019*
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 2023*
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*

Service to Parkland College

Free Manga Storytelling Workshop 2019 Parkland College

President of Japanese Culture Club 2018

Student Senator 2015

Press

[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

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*

Art Display *Champaign City Council Chambers 40 North Champaign Arts Council 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)

Fulbright Semifinalist Japan 2023

Fulbright Alternate Japan 2022

Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students Summer 2022 *University of Illinois*

Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students Spring 2022 *University of Illinois*

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)