

## **Kofi Bazzell-Smith**

Artist | Educator | Professional Boxer | U.S.- Japan Bridging Scholar

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[www.kofimanga.com](http://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 \$15K grant 2023  
*Grant Writer, Host, Event Organizer, Teaching Assistant, and Japanese-English Interpreter*

Curated an international manga exhibition featuring artists from the US and Japan 2023

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

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

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

Graduate Coursework: Japanese Cinema, Japanese 440-441, Word and Image in Chinese Art,  
Graduate Art seminars 593/595, ARTS 591 Interdisciplinary Seminar

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

**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

### **Published work**

"Karasu" in "Interseminars: Speculation and Imagining Otherwise." Academic book  
produced during the interdisciplinary fellowship sponsored by the Mellon Foundation  
Humanities Research Institute, University of Illinois 2023

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

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

Jiyu; manga anthology; Kansai Gaidai University 2019

### **Teaching**

Manga Workshops (in Japanese)

Middlebury College Summer Intensive Language Program Japanese School 2023

Boxing Workshops (in Japanese)

Middlebury College Summer Intensive Language Program Japanese School 2023

Manga Production (Studio); Instructor 2023 University of Illinois  
Guest Lecture Developing a Global Practice Musashi University 2023  
Guest Lecture Networking Abroad Aoyama Gakuin University 2023  
Guest Lecture Visual Communication University of California Los Angeles 2023  
Manga Drawing and Storytelling Workshop University of California Los Angeles 2023  
Guest Lecture Historical Context and Idiosyncrasies of Japanese Manga  
Auburn University Art and Art History Department 2023  
Comic Paneling Composition Workshops  
Auburn University Art and Art History Department 2023  
Intersections between art practice and engagement work in Japan  
Auburn University Art and Art History Department 2023  
Manga Storytelling Workshop 2023 University of Texas at Austin  
Guest Lecture on Art composition 2022 Middlebury College Advanced Japanese Course  
Guest Lecture; Middlebury College Course on Japan and the Body  
Manga Production (Studio); Instructor 2022 University of Illinois  
Art for non-majors (Studio); Instructor 2022 University of Illinois  
Guest Lecture/Workshop; Manga; 2022 Illinois Wesleyan University  
Guest Lecture; Conveying movement in Sequential Art; 2022 UCLA  
Graduate Teaching Assistant; Visualization Drawing; 2021 University of Illinois  
Guest Lecture: Art and Studying Abroad; 2021 University of Illinois  
Guest Lecture: Manga production; 2021 Japan House University of Illinois  
English as a Second Language; Teaching Internship 2019 TLC (The Language Company)

### **Service to University**

Organizer/Exhibitor/Panelist: Interseminars Initiative Interdisciplinary Symposium  
University of Illinois Humanities Research Institute 2023  
Organizer, host, and Japanese-English interpreter for multiple lectures and workshops  
Kazuo Maekawa Visiting Artist Residency 2023 University of Illinois  
Graduate Student Advisory Representative 2022-23 Art & Design University of Illinois  
Networking Lecture for Art Education PhD students 2022 University of Illinois  
Artist Talk; Manga as a tool for Global Engagement 2022 University of Illinois YMCA  
Panel Discussion; Decolonizing Art Education and Professional Development  
Krannert Performing Arts Center University of Illinois 2022  
Public Artist Talk/Critique; Azuki Manga Series 2022 University of Illinois  
Artist Talk; Manga, Boxing and Japan; Asian American Cultural Center  
2021 University of Illinois  
Small Press Fest! Manga Storytelling Workshop 2020-21 University of Illinois  
Founder/President Japanese Culture Club (JCC) 2018-2021 Eastern Illinois University  
International Education Committee member 2020-21 Eastern Illinois University  
Japanese language instruction (club activity) 2018-20 JCC Eastern Illinois University  
Artist Talk; Power Talks: Visual Storytelling 2020 Eastern Illinois University  
Asian Studies Conference Talk 2019 Eastern Illinois University  
East Asian Languages Workshop 2018 Eastern Illinois University

Manga Storytelling Workshop 2018 Eastern Illinois University  
Global Cultural Night Emcee 2018 Eastern Illinois University  
President Japanese Culture Club 2019 Parkland College  
Manga Storytelling Workshop 2018 Parkland College  
Student Senator 2015 Parkland College

### **Service to Community**

Artist and Panelist Melanated and Animated: Black and Japanese Cross-Cultural Connections; Japan Arts Foundation; Logan Theatre in Chicago 2023  
Public Manga Workshop Auburn University Draughton Library 2023  
Panel Discussion on the Japanese manga industry with Kazuo Maekawa; C2E2 Guest Speaker; Japanese Language Festival 2023 Japan-America Society of Washington  
Panel Discussion "I-as-We" Comics 2023 BIPOC POP Comics and Multimedia Symposium University of Texas at Austin  
Artist Talk: Networking in Japan 2022 Central Connecticut State University  
Artist Talk: Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement 2022 Murray State University  
Artist Talk: Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement 2022 Nihon Manga Juku (Japan)  
Artist Talk: Manga as a Tool for Global Engagement 2022 Bunsei University of Art (Japan)  
BIPOC POP Symposium Panel Discussion "Global Forms and Ancestral Identities" 2022 University of Texas at Austin  
Artist Talk: Creating a Global Career 2022 Parkland College  
Open to public Free Manga Workshop 2021 University YMCA University of Illinois  
Manga Workshop for ELL students 2021 Urbana High School  
Panel Discussion: BIPOC Liberation fest 2021 University of Illinois  
TEDx Talk 2021 University of Illinois at Chicago  
Artist Talk 2021 University of Illinois Graphic Design department  
Artist Talk: Manga 2021 Edison Middle School 2021  
Artist Talk: Black History Month, Black Joy 2021 Metcalf Middle School  
Boxing Trainer 2014-21 Luyando Boxing  
Anime and Manga: Afro-American Intersections with Japanese Culture co-presenter with Eric Calderon; US Japan Bridging Foundation 2020  
Panel on James Baldwin with Princeton Scholar Dr. Eddie Glaude Jr. 2020 University of Illinois  
Artist Talk 2020 University of Illinois East Asian Languages and Cultures department  
Poetry reading and discussion 2020 UNESCO Center for Global Citizenship  
Sounds Like Community; Artist Talk 2020 Urbana Independent Media Center  
James Baldwin Commemoration Artist Talk 2020 Champaign-Urbana  
TOMODACHI Generation Summit Conference 2019 Showa Women's University; Tokyo  
Panelist; International Engagement 2019 UIUC International and Area Studies Library  
Free Manga Storytelling Workshop 2019 Urbana Free Library  
Free Manga Storytelling Workshop 2019 Parkland College  
Public reading in Mandarin for Christmas at Tarble center 2018 Eastern Illinois University  
English Conversation Partner Volunteer 2010-15 Intensive English Institute

## **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 and Shows**

Curator/Participant in group show: Drawing Bridges: An International Manga Showcase

University of Illinois Humanities Research Institute 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

Artist's Alley print show; University of Texas at Austin 2023

Solo Exhibition; Uncanny Juxtapositions; McKinley Foundation Champaign, Illinois 2023

Solo Exhibition; Azuki the Rock Paper Scissors Champion 2022 University of Illinois YMCA

Art Display 2022 Champaign City Council Chambers 40 North Champaign Arts Council

Future Spaces in Community Places group exhibition 2022 Murray State University

Future Spaces in Community Places group exhibition 2022 Illinois Wesleyan University

Public Critique; MFA Program 2021 University of Illinois Art + Design

8 to Create Live Drawing Exhibition 2021 University of Illinois Art + Design

Research and Creative Works Conference 2020-21 Eastern Illinois University

Black Lives Matter Outdoor Installation 2020 Common Ground Food Co-op

Illinois Board of Higher Education Annual Gallery 2019

Solo Manga Art Exhibition for Asian Heritage Month 2019

Booth Library Eastern Illinois University

Solo Exhibition 2019 Art Department Passage Gallery

Booth Library Eastern Illinois University

Urbana Independent Media Center Exhibition 2018;2019

Boneyard Arts Festival 2017

C-U Changemakers Solo Art Exhibition 2016

## **Residencies**

*Pending: McGuire Artist in Residence at The Blake School, Minneapolis MN 2024*

Summer Art Camp 2023 High Museum of Art

Visiting Faculty Middlebury College Intensive Summer Japanese Program 2023

Visiting Scholar Residency University of California Los Angeles

Asian Languages and Cultures Department 2023

Visiting Artist Residency Auburn University Art and Art History Department 2023

Visiting Faculty Residency Middlebury College 2022

## **Grants and Awards**

AIGA Scholarship: Coyne Family Foundation Illustration Award 2023 (\$3000)

Inaugural Comics Studies Society Frederick Luis Aldama Leadership Award 2023 (\$500)

Future Faculty Career Exploration Program Fellowship

Rochester Institute of Technology 2023

Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship

School of Fine and Applied Arts University of Illinois 2023 (\$10,000)

Center for Advanced Studies George A Miller Visiting Artist Grant 2023

(Kazuo Maekawa from Tokyo) University of Illinois (\$15,000)

Art & Design department Visiting Artist Grant 2023

(Maekawa residency) 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

Midwest Animation Promotion Society Manga Award 2019 (\$3000)