

KARA MSHINDA, MA

431 Orchard Avenue | Yeadon, Pennsylvania 19050
(215) 678-1497 | kjmshinda@gmail.com | karamshinda.com

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Anthropology, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, May 2007
Specialization: Anthropology of Visual Communication
Thesis: "Writing against the City: Literacy and Socialization among Graffiti Writers"
Advisor: Paul B. Garrett, PhD

Bachelor of Arts, Interdisciplinary Anthropology (Honors), The University of Akron, Akron, OH, June 2002
Minor: Classical Studies
Honors Thesis: "Skin Deep: The Body Politics of Naturists in Rocky River, Ohio"
Advisor: Carolyn Behrman, PhD

Master of Divinity Program, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, September 2011-June 2012

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
August 2019 – Present
Course: TYLE 0805: Race, Identity, and Experience in American Art (General Education, Race & Diversity)

As Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Tyler School of Art and Architecture, I have taught over 600 first-year students across 24 sections since 2019 in TYLE 0805: Race, Identity, and Experience in American Art, a General Education course fulfilling the mandatory Race & Diversity credit. I design comprehensive learning portfolios emphasizing visual literacy and critical analysis, create field trip assignments connecting archival materials to course concepts about representation and power, and facilitate student engagement with complex theoretical frameworks including survivance, Afrofuturism, and Indigenous Futurisms. My teaching employs growth-oriented, descriptive assessment approaches that support freshman learners through scaffolded assignments covering colonial through contemporary American art.

Adjunct Instructor, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

August 2005 – May 2006

Course: Cultures of the World

As Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Anthropology, I taught Cultures of the World, an introductory anthropology course surveying various cultures from different global regions with emphasis on globalization and cultural transmission. I developed curriculum focusing on how cultural practices are transmitted and localized in the 21st century, utilizing ethnographic examples from popular culture, food practices, and child language socialization to engage diverse learners. My pedagogical approach incorporated current events and multimedia materials to make anthropological concepts accessible and relevant to undergraduate students, fostering critical thinking about cultural difference and global interconnection.

Adjunct Instructor, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

June 2005 – July 2005

Course: Fundamentals of Linguistic Anthropology (two five-week summer sessions)

As Adjunct Instructor, I prepared and delivered curriculum for two five-week summer sessions of Fundamentals of Linguistic Anthropology, an intensive accelerated course covering principles in linguistic anthropology, human language acquisition, language socialization, and intercultural communication. I adapted traditional semester-length content to the compressed summer format while maintaining rigorous academic standards, designing lectures and assignments that engaged students with foundational theories about the relationship between language, culture, and society. This experience strengthened my ability to teach complex anthropological concepts in condensed timeframes and to diverse student populations seeking summer coursework.

Adjunct Instructor, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

March 2005 – June 2005

Course: Principles of Communication (for Business majors)

As Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Communication, I created and delivered course materials on interpersonal and intercultural communication practices specifically tailored to Business majors at Drexel University. My curriculum included lectures on dialect differences in the United States, language and gender, and the globalization of English, with assignments designed to connect communication theory to professional business contexts. I developed materials that helped students understand how linguistic variation and cultural difference impact workplace communication, preparing them to navigate diverse professional environments with cultural competency and effective communication strategies.

Teaching Assistant, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

August 2003 – May 2005

Course: Fundamentals of Linguistic Anthropology

As Teaching Assistant for Fundamentals of Linguistic Anthropology, I supported course instruction for classes of seventy students over two academic years, managing course logistics including proctoring examinations, grading assignments, and distributing course materials. I assisted professors with lecture preparation and provided academic support to students during office hours, clarifying complex concepts in linguistic anthropology and helping students develop analytical skills for studying language in cultural context. This experience introduced me to learning management systems and digital course platforms while developing my skills in assessment, student support, and collaborative teaching in large enrollment courses.

AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCY

Introductory Anthropology Courses

- Cultural Anthropology / Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology
- Cultures of the World / Global Cultures
- Principles of Cross-Cultural Communication / Intercultural Communication
- Fundamentals of Linguistic Anthropology / Language and Culture

Specialized Topics

- Visual Anthropology and Visual Culture Studies
- Race, Identity, and Representation in Art and Culture
- Urban Anthropology and Youth Subcultures
- Language Socialization and Literacy Practices
- Globalization and Popular Culture
- Material Culture and Museum Studies

Pedagogical Strengths

- Developing visual literacy and critical thinking skills in diverse student populations
 - Creating accessible curriculum for first-year and non-traditional students
 - Integrating multimedia learning tools and experiential learning opportunities
 - Employing growth-oriented, descriptive assessment approaches
 - Designing field experiences that connect theory to community resources
 - Facilitating discussions on complex issues of identity, power, and representation
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RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Network Co-Director, Tiger Strikes Asteroid Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

2024 – Present

- Co-lead artist-run collaborative network fostering critical dialogue and interdisciplinary exchange
- Organize exhibitions, talks, and professional development opportunities
- Build partnerships across educational and cultural institutions

Fellowship Director, Da Vinci Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA

2021 – 2025

- Direct artist fellowship program supporting emerging and established artists
- Evaluate applications and portfolios using established rubrics and selection criteria
- Coordinate professional development programming for creative practitioners
- Demonstrate commitment to arts education and community engagement

Program Facilitator, Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia, PA

2017 – 2019

- Facilitated educational programming connecting historical narratives to contemporary audiences
- Developed interpretive materials making complex historical content accessible
- Engaged diverse public audiences in dialogue about American identity and citizenship
- Applied anthropological perspectives to public history education

Ethnographer, Drexel University College of Medicine, Philadelphia, PA

February 2007 – December 2008

- Served as ethnographer and project manager in the Division of Perinatal Research, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Managed qualitative research project analyzing preterm birth risks among African American women
- Conducted ethnographic interviews and participant observation, demonstrating research methods applicable to teaching anthropology
- Developed research protocols and tools for data collection and analysis

Focus Group Facilitator, National Children's Study, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

January 2009 – March 2009

- Conducted focus group interviews investigating the impact of social and cultural differences on maternal health practices
 - Assisted researchers with development of interview questions and discussion topics
 - Applied qualitative research methods central to anthropological inquiry
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RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

Master's Thesis

"Writing against the City: Literacy and Socialization among Graffiti Writers," Temple University, 2007

Advisor: Paul B. Garrett, PhD

Conducted ethnographic research on language socialization and literacy practices within a community of graffiti writers in Philadelphia, analyzing the orthographic system of "Hip Hop" style graffiti and investigating mentor-apprenticeship relationships between expert and novice writers.

Honors Thesis

"Skin Deep: The Body Politics of Naturists in Rocky River, Ohio," The University of Akron, 2002

Advisor: Carolyn Behrman, PhD

Conducted ethnographic research in a small community of naturists in northeastern Ohio utilizing participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, and other qualitative research methods.

Publications

"The Impact of Social Disadvantage on Preconception Health, Illness, and Well-Being: An Intersectional Analysis." Vijaya K. Hogan, DrPH, Jennifer F. Culhane, PhD, Kara Ja'Nice Crews, MA, Cheryl B. Mwaria, PhD, Diane L. Rowley, MD, MPH, Lisa Levenstein, PhD, Leith Patricia Mullings, PhD. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 27.3. 32-42. January 2013.

Kara Mshinda, "Gripped, The Black Journey, and Dispersion," *Return, Repatriate, Repair: The Case for Abolition at the Penn Museum*, Jake Nussbaum and Abdul-Aliy A. Muhammad, editors, 2023.

Kara Mshinda, "The 'Black Art' Renaissance: African Sculpture and Modernism across Continents" by Joshua I. Cohen, *CAA.reviews*, September 28, 2021.

Public Scholarship & Media

"Of Black Wombhood," oral history and visual art collaboration with curator Tanya Latortue, featured in multi-venue exhibition series (Helix Gallery at Thomas Jefferson University, Da Vinci Art Alliance, TILT Institute for the Contemporary Image) and discussed on Philly has heART podcast, June 2025. Explored intersections of Black maternal experience, visual representation, and community-based research methodologies through collaborative oral history practice.

Conference Presentations (Selected)

Crews, K. "Virtual Cityscapes and the Globalization of Graffiti Writing." Presented at Mediating Practices: New Directions in Visual Anthropology and Cross Cultural Mediamaking, Temple University. April 2006.

Crews, K. "Shared Literacies and Global Graffiti Writing." Presented at the 104th American Anthropological Association Meetings, Washington, DC. November 2005.

Hogan, V., J. Culhane, K. Crews, and C. Mwaria. "Challenges in Studying Race, Class and Gender among African American Women of Childbearing Age in Philadelphia." Presented at the 106th American Anthropological Association Meetings, Washington, DC. November 2007.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & WORKSHOPS

"Creative Collage with Instant Film," Kutztown University, Patchwork Pedagogy Institute, Kutztown, PA, 2024

"Instant Film and Documenting Your Travel Journey," workshop for Mandela Washington Fellows, sponsored by Iacocca Institute, Lehigh University, Cherry Street Pier, Philadelphia, PA, 2024

"Vernacular Photography: A Visual Study of the Hand," Center for Experimental Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 2023

Panelist, "What is an Expanded Art Practice?" Da Vinci Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA, 2023

Juneteenth Flag-making Workshop, Please Touch Museum, Philadelphia, PA, 2022

Race and Identity Artist Series, Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Philadelphia, PA, 2022
Co-curated exhibition series featuring artists Alex Smith, Rami George, and Leroy Johnson, connecting course themes to contemporary artistic practice (co-curated with Ricky Yanas)

"Reclaiming Identity: Collage in American Art Movements, 1960s – 1970s," Philadelphia CollageWorks Workshop, Philadelphia, PA, 2021

Collage Art Workshop, Morris Home, Philadelphia, PA, 2021

QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS

Teaching & Pedagogy

- Seven years of postsecondary teaching experience with diverse student populations
- Curriculum development for introductory and specialized anthropology courses
- Experience with learning management systems (Blackboard, Canvas) and multimedia teaching tools
- Skilled in facilitating discussions on sensitive topics including race, identity, and social justice
- Proficient in scaffolded assignment design supporting student skill development
- Experienced with both traditional and accelerated course formats

Research & Analysis

- Ethnographic research methods including participant observation and qualitative interviewing
- Oral history methodologies and community-based collaborative research
- Visual analysis and visual literacy education
- Qualitative data collection, management, and analysis
- Academic writing and presentation skills
- Literature review and scholarly research

Communication & Collaboration

- Public speaking and presentation to diverse audiences
- Program facilitation and educational programming
- Cross-cultural communication competency
- Collaboration with interdisciplinary teams
- Professional writing and correspondence

SERVICE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Guest Juror, Glen Foerd Artist in Residence Program 2026, Glen Foerd, Philadelphia, PA, 2025

Exhibition Committee Member, Da Vinci Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA, 2021 – 2025

William Way Arts Committee, William Way LGBT Community Center, 2021 – 2025

Community Advisory Member, Killjoy's Kastle: A Lesbian Feminist Haunted House, Icebox Project Space, 2019

Board Member, Calvary Center for Culture and Community, 2014-2016

Academic Service (Temple University, 2003-2006)

- Graduate Associate, Center for Humanities at Temple
 - Graduate Student Representative, College of Liberal Arts Graduate Committee
 - Chair, conference panels at American Anthropological Association meetings
 - Co-organizer, Annual Anthropology of Visual Communication Conferences
 - President, Graduate Association for Visual Anthropology
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AWARDS & HONORS

Marrazzo/Bartol Teaching Artist Micro-Grant, Philadelphia, PA, 2024

Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Grant, Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, 2024

Wind Challenge Exhibition Series, Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia, PA, 2023
(Jurors: Victoria Ahmadizadeh Melendez and Yolanda Wisher)

Teaching Assistant Recognition Award, nominated by F. Niyi Akinnaso, PhD, Department of Anthropology, awarded by the College of Liberal Arts, Temple University, June 2004

Graduate Associateship Award, Spring 2006, awarded by the Center for the Humanities at Temple. Funded \$3,500.

Research Assistantship Award, Fall 2005, awarded by the Department of Anthropology, Temple University. Funded \$3,500.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS & CREATIVE WORK

Solo Exhibitions

ALTER/ALTAR, Cherry Street Pier, Philadelphia, PA, 2025

Assembled Presence, The Viewing Room at Dina Wind Foundation (curated by Gerard Silva), Philadelphia, PA, 2025

Instant Artifacts, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia, PA, 2023

Selected Group Exhibitions (Recent)

Of Black Wombhood, multiple venues (curated by Tanya Latortue), Philadelphia, PA, 2025

Stomping Ground, 20*20 Gallery (curated by Megan Pollin Hernandez), Lansdowne, PA, 2025

Spirit in the Dark, Prism Arts Philadelphia (curated by Noah Mars), Philadelphia, PA, 2024

Black Hair: Resistance, Freedom and Beauty, Icebox Project Space (curated by Chelsey Luster), Philadelphia, PA, 2023

[Note: Creative work demonstrates expertise in visual culture, material culture analysis, and interdisciplinary approaches applicable to teaching anthropology and visual studies courses]

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Tiger Strikes Asteroid Philadelphia, 2020 – Present

Philadelphia CollageWorks, 2019 – 2021

REFERENCES

Available upon request