

Mangaka in Luxembourg – Part 1: Sabrina Kaufmann

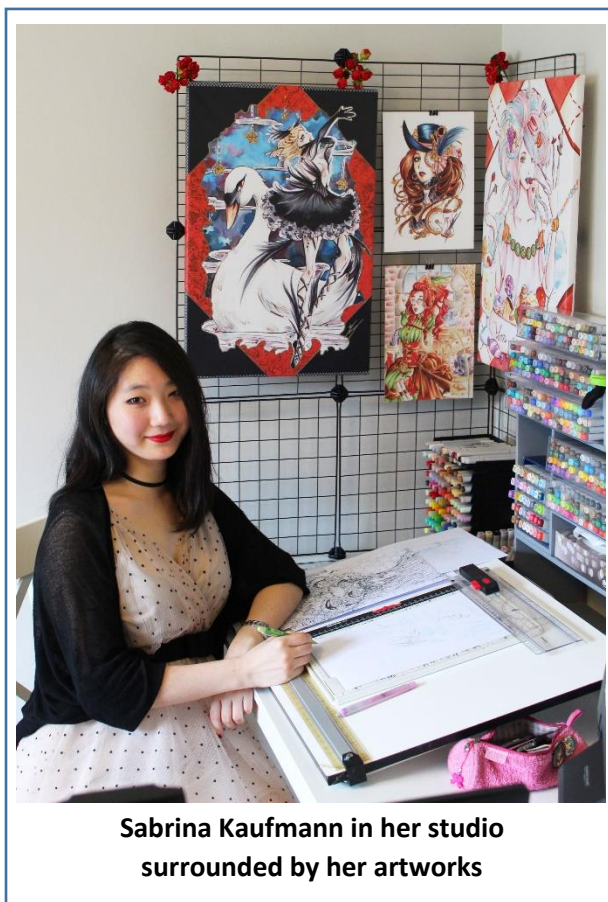
Manga is on a steady rise, all over the world. In the last few years, Japanese comics have gotten more and more popular, even more so in the pandemic. With this international rise, many mangaka start out their careers and draw their own manga, some only recently, and some have been drawing for decades.

Luxembourg is no exception, there are manga here in the country as well, drawn by talented artists. In this article series, we would like to present some of them, starting with Ms Sabrina Kaufmann.

Part 1: Sabrina Kaufmann

Sabrina Kaufmann has been well-respected mangaka in Luxembourg for a long time. She had her debut and first publication when she was only 14 years old, and ever since then, she belongs to the most well-known mangaka in the country, with over 10 years of experience in drawing and teaching manga. Today, at 26 years of age, she works as a professional freelance artist since 4 years, with many clients, ranging from schools, ministries, companies to conventions and manga publishers.

Her initial interest in the world of anime and manga began with “Naruto”, a popular Shonen (usually for boys) series, which introduced her to the medium. Her first manga that she bought herself was “Inuyasha”, and from there on out, her interest in manga, especially the Shojo (usually for girls) manga direction, grew. Her interest in fashion design drew her to Shojo, as well as to series that are explicitly about fashion and lifestyle, such as “Nana” by Ai Yazawa. Her idol is Shinichi Sakamoto, who has a very elaborate and sensitive style, with thin lines and elegant designs



Sabrina Kaufmann in her studio surrounded by her artworks

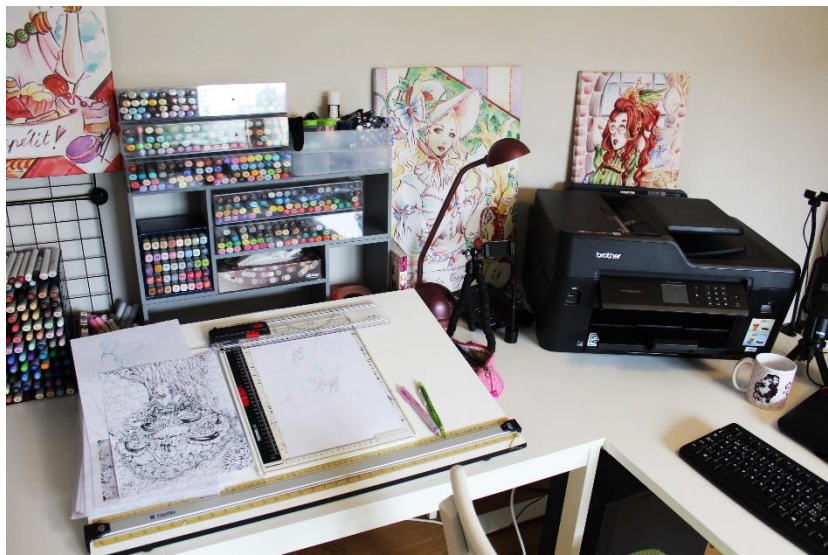
– Sakamoto’s latest works are lavish retellings of the French Revolution (“Innocent”) and the story of “Dracula”.

Just like Sakamoto, Kaufmann mixes the black and white manga style with Western stories, for example in her work “Illustrated Fairytales” (2016+), where she adapts fairy tales by the Grimm Brothers, Giambattista Basile and Christian Andersen into her own characteristic style. The

manga, published by Kaufmann herself on Tapastic online for free first in 2016, and printed into a book in 2019, is a wonderful retelling of well-known and lesser known fairy tales. Right now, she is working on the second volume.

Luxembourg itself can be found in her works as well, such as in the collaborative work “Fortific(a)tions” (2020), which was a collaborative project with several artists, to tell one big story in many segments, set in Luxembourg City. Every artist draws in their own style, but the themes and story connect them all, making for a multi-faceted look at a historically vibrant city. This art project was supported by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and the City of Luxembourg, among others.

Nowadays, Kaufmann has many projects that support her freelance artist life: She has a Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/sabrinakaufmann>) where she shares her knowledge about publishing and freelance work, she founded “My Artbiz Academia”, (<https://www.myartbizacademia.com/>) a website with advice and coaching for those who want to learn the business side of art, as well as a supportive community that she manages. Every Tuesday, she posts a video, and even with all of that, she gives courses in schools or creates commissions for professional clients.



Her art station (with many copic markers, a drawing desk, and her computer with printer)



**„Fortific(a)tions“ (2020) and „Illustrated Fairytales“ (2019),
donated by Sabrina Kaufmann to the Embassy of Japan in
Luxembourg, and available to read for anyone!**

Upon asking her what she would like to change in the manga world of Luxembourg, she says that the stigma of “art is not a real job” is still very present. Often older generations and concerned parents do not see a future in art for children, not as a job, and in the worst case, neither as a hobby. This is why she has started her video tutorials and courses, to give young people the support they might

not get in their surroundings, or to prepare them with realistic and helpful experiences in entering the art world.

Another point she mentions, which also feeds into her teachings, is that most people think that “good art needs expensive tools”. Kaufmann states that anyone can start learning to draw, and will only need a pencil, an eraser, and a sheet of normal paper. This is how she teaches her courses as well, technique and art basics are much more important than expensive material, which also keeps her courses affordable and more easily accessible to anyone. Kids and teenagers are especially interested in learning, she noticed in her manga drawing classes in schools, and is glad that the love for manga is there in Luxembourg. (Young kids today enjoy Naruto, just as Kaufmann did when she was young!) To teach and give feedback is important for any upcoming artist, to feel validated and supported in their passion. “Helping out and supporting fellow artists” is very much a credo that can be found in all her projects, which accentuates her positive influence in the Luxembourgish manga world.

Sabrina Kaufmann is not only a talented artist herself, with many published works, she is also a driving force of new talent in the country, and gives fantastic support for anyone who is interested in starting or learning about manga!