

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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INAUGURAL MIXED ROOTS FILM & LITERARY FESTIVAL

TO BE HELD AT THE JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

- WHAT:** The Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival celebrates those who have created and continue to create works addressing the Mixed racial and cultural experience through film screenings, readings and workshops.
- WHEN:** June 12 – June 14, 2008, in celebration of Loving Day, the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision affirming the right of people of different races to marry.
- WHERE:** Japanese American National Museum, 369 E. First St., Los Angeles, CA
- WHO:** Co-producers Heidi Durrow and Fanshen Cox of the popular podcast *Mixed Chicks Chat* (www.mixedchickschat.com) will host the event. The Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival is *inclusive*: anyone who identifies as Mixed, has a trans-racial/cultural adoptive family, or who supports interracial/cultural relationships is welcome. Admission to the Festival is free. Pre-registration at www.mixedrootsfilmandliteraryfestival.org is highly recommended.
- WHY:** In the past, artists of Mixed heritage and their works have been forced into mono-racial/cultural categories based on antiquated notions such as the 'one drop rule.' The Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival validates and celebrates Mixed identity and experience. The goals for the festival are to encourage emerging storytellers to explore the Mixed experience; introduce and encourage role models for future generations of Mixed artists; provide a safe and positive forum for honest discussions about race and culture; and to promote the Mixed experience as a valuable and important part of World History.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

SPONSORS: From The Heart Productions (www.fromtheheartproductions.com), the Japanese American National Museum (www.janm.org); Sweets for the Soul (www.sweetsforthesoul.com); Levantine Cultural Center; Subway/Debbie Dery; The Cheesecake Factory; Trader Joe's.

CONFIRMED PROGRAMS/GUESTS:



Opening Night Address: Rebecca Walker

Rebecca Walker is a best-selling author, an acclaimed speaker and teacher, and an award-winning visionary. When she was just twenty-five, *Time Magazine* named her one of the fifty most influential future leaders of America—an award which has since been followed by many others, including the *Women Who Could Be President Award* from the League of Women Voters, the *Champion of Choice Award* from CARAL, and the *Women of Distinction Award* from the American Association of University Women. Rebecca's memoir, *Black, White, & Jewish*, became an international bestseller and won the Alex Award from the American Library Association. *People Magazine* called *Black, White, and Jewish*, "A heartbreaking tale of self-creation...Walker

masterfully illuminates differences between black and white America." Rebecca is the daughter of Pulitzer-prize winning novelist Alice Walker and esteemed civil rights attorney Mel Leventhal. She lives in Hawaii and Northern California with her son and his father.

Honoree: Kip Fulbeck "for inspirational dedication to celebrating and illuminating the Mixed racial and cultural experience."

Kip Fulbeck is recognized as one of the world's premier artists exploring Hapa identity through art, film, literature and spoken word.. His popular books (*Part Asian, 100% Hapa*; and *Paper Bullets: A Fictional Autobiography*) and short films (*Banana Split*) speak to and inspire a You Tube generation to political involvement. Kip has been featured on CNN, MTV, and PBS, and has performed and exhibited in more than 20 countries. He is a Professor of Art and an affiliate faculty in Asian American Studies and Film & Media Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara and is a nationally-ranked masters swimmer and ocean lifeguard. His current book is titled *Permanence: Tattoo Portraits by Kip Fulbeck* published by Chronicle Books.

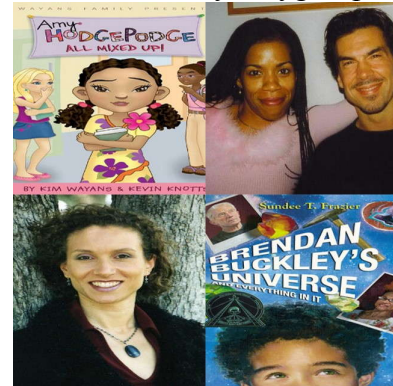


Opening Night Loving Day Celebration - An evening to celebrate the anniversary of the Loving decision, and to co-mingle and network with festival participants. Presented in cooperation with Loving Day (www.lovingday.org). Loving Day's mission is to fight prejudice through education and to build a sense of community among people to engage in meaningful interracial and intercultural relationships. DJ Life and DJ Vika spin decades of dance floor classics.



Family Day, hosted by iPride. Multiracial Children's Playgroup and Story Time hosted by iPride. Saturday, June 14, 2008 10:00am-11:00am. Enjoy a Multiracial Family Playgroup and Story Time with featured

readings by Sundee Frazier--*Brendan Buckley's Universe and Everything In It*, and Kim Wayans--*Amy Hodgepodge*. Spend an hour together as a community. Meet other parents, accidental neighbors and new friends! Children will enjoy arts and crafts and free play as well as the story time. Light snacks and drinks will be provided. All ages.



Film Screening & Discussion hosted by iPride. Saturday, June 14, 2008 11:15am-12:30

Watch the celebrated family film, *My People Are . . . Youth Pride in Mixed Heritage* dir. Aarin Burch, which addresses the Mixed experience from young people's perspectives. *My People Are... Youth Pride in Mixed Heritage* promotes positive racial & ethnic identity in ALL children, highlighting the multiracial experience. Discover a language that embraces multiracial identity and gives visibility to experiences this community faces. In this 20-minute film, Young performers share pride in cultures, history & ethnic roots through theater, spoken word, interview, dance, rap & song. Panel discussion moderated by Jil Christina of iPride with panelists Sundee Frazier, Kim Wayans and Tarah Fleming (producer of *My People Are . . .*) on their experiences writing literature and making films for Mixed children. Ages: 8 to adult. Since 1979, iPride has supported multiethnic, multiracial and transracially adopted youth and their families.



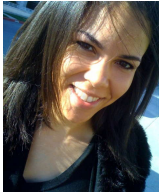
Saturday Night Reception – hosted by AMEA (the Association of Multiethnic Americans www.ameasite.org). Enjoy a family-friendly reception hosted by AMEA where the scholarship winner of the first AMEA/Biracial Family Network (BFN) will be announced. Media Aid Center students will interview guests for a documentary in celebration of AMEA's 20th Anniversary, and bid in silent auction.



Multigenerational Community Dialogue– in cooperation with MASC (Multiracial Americans of Southern California). a moderated panel discussion featuring an array of multiracial community figures covering the issues of youth, parenting, activism, and scholarship. This talk will bring forth the perspectives of different generations and members of the community, and features Dr. Rudy P. Guevarra, Jr. of UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara, a scholar who has done groundbreaking research on the “Mexipino” – Mexican and Filipino identity. The panel discussion will culminate with an open forum, an opportunity for the community to dialogue with

panelists and each other, to have an important conversation about the mixed-heritage community today. All ages are welcome to attend.

A SAMPLE OF WORKSHOPS TO BE OFFERED:



Zadi Diaz - New Media 101: Creating an Online Show

With the landscape of media changing so rapidly, how does one learn to understand and take advantage of what the online world has to offer? In this workshop, Zadi Diaz will show you how you can create a show, tap into niche audiences, and build a loyal community on the web. She'll also provide examples of people who are succeeding in the new media/Internet TV landscape and offer tips on what does and doesn't work. Workshop is followed by Q&A.

Zadi Diaz is a producer, writer, host and speaker best known for her work on the Webby Award-winning Internet TV series *EPIC-FU*. She is co-founder and principal of *Smashface Productions*, a new media production company, and co-founder of *Pixelodeon*, an annual screening festival recognizing innovation, inspiration, and community in global online video. Her online work has been highlighted in the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *CBS Evening News*, *MTV*, *TV Guide*, *The Associated Press*, *The Guardian*, and many other national publications. She is a *Film Independent Project: Involve Fellow* and a member of the *International Academy of Digital Arts & Sciences* (IADAS). Zadi is also a select member of *The Transatlantic Network 2020* founded by the British Council, a multilateral network engaging future leaders to collaboratively address global issues.

Crafting the Multicultural Memoir: Mining the Mixed Experience for Universal Appeal

Lori L. Tharps

In this one-hour workshop, we will examine the memoir as both readers and writers. What is it that attracts us to reading memoirs, and as writers, compels us to write them? Is it an act of indulgence or an attempt to help others by sharing our life lessons with the world? Using the examples of Rebecca Walker (*Black, White, Jewish*), James McBride (*The Color of Water*), Angela Nissel (*Mixed*), Asha Miró (*Daughter of the Ganges*) and others, we will discover what makes a memoir memorable and figure out how to take our own, unique, multicultural experiences and mold them into universal tales of literary genius!

Lori L. Tharps is a freelance journalist, editor, author and teacher. Originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she attended Smith College and received a master's degree from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. After graduation from Columbia, Tharps was a staff reporter at Vibe magazine and then a correspondent for Entertainment Weekly. She has written for Ms., Savoy, Suede, Glamour, Odyssey Couleur, Bitch and Essence magazines. She is the co-author of the award winning book, *Hair Story: Untangling the*



LORI THARPS
Photo © John Bertram

Roots of Black Hair in America (St. Martin's Press). Her work can also be read in the anthologies, *Young Wives Tales: Stories of Love and Partnership* (Seal Press), *Naked: Black Women Bare All About their Skin Hair, Hips, Lips and Other Parts* (Perigee) and *Women: Images & Realities. A Multicultural Anthology* (Avalon). Tharps blogs at My American Meltingpot. Her memoir, *Kinky Gazpacho: Life, Love & Spain* (Atria/Simon&Schuster) debuted in March, 2008.

ORGANIZERS:

Fanshen Cox Founder & Producer, Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival

Actress/Producer/Podcaster/Educator

Fanshen graduated with honors from the *University of Michigan* and holds an MA from *Teachers College, Columbia University*. She served 2 years as a *Peace Corps Volunteer* in Cape Verde, West Africa and was given the Peace Corps' *Franklin H. Williams Award* when teaching in a high school in the South Bronx. She honed her production skills as a *Film Independent Project: Involve Fellow*; and is the co-producer and co-host of *Mixed Chicks Chat* - the only live, weekly podcast about being racially and culturally Mixed (available on itunes or at www.mixedchickschat.com). She was recently quoted in *The Guardian* and served as an interviewer on *StoryCorps' Griot Initiative*. As an actress, her credits include: *Gone Baby Gone* (directed by Ben Affleck), *Ellie Parker* (opposite Naomi Watts) and numerous television and theater roles. The word *fanshen* was created by peasants during China's land reform movement and means *start a revolution*.

Fanshen's parents are Jamaican, Scottish, Danish and Native American and she has dedicated her life to sharing her story as a woman of Mixed racial and cultural heritages.



Heidi W. Durrow Founder & Producer, Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival

Writer/Podcaster/Lawyer

A graduate of *Stanford*

University, Columbia

University's Graduate School of Journalism and *Yale Law School*,

Heidi Durrow is a Los Angeles writer who is African-American and Danish. A former litigator at *Cravath, Swaine & Moore*, Heidi has also worked as a consultant

to the *National Basketball Association* and *National Football League* teaching conflict management and decision-making workshops. As a fiction writer, Heidi has won several awards for her writing—which focuses on issues of biracial and bicultural identity--including the *Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition*, and the *Chapter One Fiction Contest*. She has received grants from the *New York Foundation for the Arts*, the

American Scandinavian Foundation, the *Lois Roth Endowment* and an *Emerging Writers' Award* from the *Jerome Foundation*. The *Elizabeth George Foundation* and the *American Antiquarian Society* have awarded her grants for her novel-in-progress about Miss Lala, a mulatta circus performer and strongwoman of the Victorian era. Heidi's writing has been published in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Poem Memoir Story*, *Smokelong Quarterly*, and *The Literary Review*, as well as on the popular blog *Light-skinned-ed Girl* (www.lightskinnededgirl.typepad.com). She was recently nominated for a *Pushcart Prize*. Her novel manuscript won Barbara Kingsolver's 2008 *Bellwether Prize for Literature of Social Change*; her book will be published in Fall 2009 by Algonquin Books. Heidi is the co-host and co-producer of *Mixed Chicks Chat* (www.mixedchickschat.com), the only live weekly show about being racially and culturally mixed.

Lesia Lakin
Writer/Producer

Director, Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival



Lesia Lakin is a writer/producer who began her career in advertising. Her work for clients such as ABC, ESPN, Oxygen, MTV, Snapple and the New York Mets has won many awards in advertising. This experience in commercials led Lesia to television and film production. Starting as a director's assistant on Warner Bros.' *Vegas Vacation* and Universal's *Billy Madison*, she excelled in production and became the Executive Producer of Mambo Entertainment. While at Mambo, she was responsible for the series *Neighbors* for HBO, as well as working on the Academy Award® nominated short film, *Birch Street Gym*, NBC's *Sunday's Best*, and the MTV series, *A Day In The Life*. Lesia also

produced the feature film, *The Independent*, featuring Jerry Stiller, Janeane Garafalo and Ben Stiller. *The Independent* is currently being adapted for the New York stage.

Michelle-Mehri Mousavi (Meesh)
Writer/Producer/Educator

Festival Coordinator



Meesh is an award-winning performance, recording and media artist who has screened and performed internationally. She has more than a decade of experience working as a singer, actor, director, editor, cinematographer and producer and has collaborated with dozens of artists, most notably Shirin Neshat, Philip Glass, and Dr. Ysaye Barnwell. She has taught at museums and cultural centers throughout the country, including the Santa Fe Art Institute and the Walker Art Center. Most recently, Meesh transitioned to

screenwriter with the musical comedy MY LIFE AS A TERRORIST. Early drafts have garnered a Jerome Media Arts Grant, a Mill Foundation Writing Fellowship, the Writer's Arc Fellowship and was shortlisted for the 2007 Sundance & Outfest Screenwriting Lab's. She is also the recipient of the 2007 Barbara Boyle Scholarship Award for most promising talent as a filmmaker and outstanding participation in Film Independent's Project:Involve Fellowship program.

Amy Kane
Producer/Non-Profit Leader

Festival Co-Coordinator



Amy Kane is a producer and the co-founder/co-Executive Director of the non-profit organization, *The Writers Arc*. Prior to that, she was a Development Executive at *Universal Pictures* and was responsible for many features films including “A Beautiful Mind,” “Cinderella Man,” “Blue Crush” and “Inside Man.” Amy also currently teaches in the Producing Program at UCLA.

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Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival 2008

Schedule

June 12-14, 2008

All events Free

Japanese American National Museum
363 East First Street L.A., CA

Thursday, June 12

6:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Check-in & Registration <i>Boeing Company Lobby</i>
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Loving Day Celebration Opening Address: Rebecca Walker DJs Life and Vika <i>Democracy Forum</i>

Friday, June 13

9:15 am - 10:00 am	Check-in & Registration <i>Boeing Company Lobby</i>	
10:15 am - 11:15 am	<i>Democracy Lab</i> <i>New Media 101: Creating an Online Show</i> Zadi Diaz	<i>National Center Conference Room</i> <i>Screenwriting & Personal Storytelling</i> Dawn Wilkinson
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	<i>National Center Conference Room</i> <i>Putting Transracial Adoptions First: Moving Beyond the Mixed Race Community</i> Lisa Marie Rollins	<i>Democracy Forum</i> <i>Race-centric Baggage R U Ready to Lighten Ur Load?</i> Kim-Marie Walker
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	BREAK Informational and Vendor Tables <i>Boeing Company Lobby</i>	
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	<i>Democracy Lab</i> Literary Readings Cassandra Love, poetry Neil Aitken, poetry Jennifer Lisa Vest, poetry Terry Culpepper, fiction Jason Sublette, fiction Kim-Marie Walker, memoir Lori Tharps, memoir	<i>Democracy Forum</i> Short Film Screenings <i>My People Are . . . Youth Pride in Mixed Heritage</i> dir. Aarin Burch <i>Silences</i> dir. Octavio Warnock-Graham <i>Our Pride: The Spirits of Black Japanese in Georgia</i> dir. Yohei Suzuki <i>Secret Asian Woman</i> dir. Dmae Roberts <i>A Single Rose</i> dir. Hanelle Culpepper <i>Nigel's Fingerprint</i> dir. Amy McConnell <i>The Pendulum</i> dir. Justin Bradshaw <i>The Touch</i> dir. Jane Clark <i>On My Skin</i> dir. Amy André
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	BREAK	
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	<i>Democracy Forum</i> Loving Prize Presentation: Kip Fulbeck Mixed Unplugged: Live Performance of the Mixed Experience	

Saturday, June 14

9:15 am - 10:00 am	Check-in & Registration Boeing Company Lobby	
10:00 am - 11:15 am	<i>Democracy Lab</i> <i>iPride Family Event: Sundee Frazier & Kim Waynans Reading & Multiracial Playgroup</i>	<i>National Center Conference Room</i> <i>The Process of Writing a Solo Show</i> Esther Friedman (10:15am-11:15am)
11:15 am - 12:30 pm	<i>Democracy Forum</i> <i>iPride Family Event: Film Screening & Discussion</i> <i>My People Are . . . Youth Pride in Mixed Heritage</i>	<i>National Center Conference Room</i> <i>Crafting the Multicultural Memoir: Mining the Mixed Experience for Universal Appeal</i> Lori Tharps (11:30am-12:30pm)
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	Informational and Vendor Tables <i>Boeing Company Lobby</i>	
12:45 pm - 1:45 pm	Brown Bag Lunch Discussion: Growing Up Betwixt & Between: Writers Jordan Elgrably, Elliott Lewis, Angela Nissel Moderator: Michelle Maltais <i>Democracy Lab</i>	
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	<i>Democracy Lab</i> Literary Readings Cassandra Love, poetry Allison Hart, poetry Neil Aitken, poetry Jennifer Lisa Vest, poetry Terry Culpepper, fiction Lori Tharps, memoir Kim-Marie Walker, memoir Jason Sublette, fiction Sundee Frazier, fiction Susan Straight, fiction	<i>Democracy Forum</i> Film Screenings <i>Silences</i> dir. Octavio Warnock-Graham <i>Slaves in the Family (Slavernes Slaegt): Part 1</i> dir. Alex Frank Larsen <i>NoHo, PA</i> dir. Dawn Green <i>Slaves in the Family (Slavernes Slaegt): Part 2</i> dir. Alex Frank Larsen
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	<i>Boeing Company Lobby/Democracy Lab/Democracy Forum</i> Reception presented by Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) Multigenerational Mixed Roots Community Dialogue presented by Multiracial Americans of Southern California (MASC)	
7:00 pm - 8:40 pm	<i>Democracy Forum</i> Feature Film Screening: <i>Crossing the Line: Multiracial Comedians</i>	
8:40 pm - 9:00pm	<i>Democracy Forum</i> Closing Remarks	



Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival DONATIONS

The first inaugural *Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival* will take place June 12th-14^h, 2008 in Los Angeles.

In the past, artists of Mixed heritage and their works have been forced into mono-racial/cultural categories based on antiquated notions such as the ‘one drop rule.’ The Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival validates and celebrates Mixed identity. It is *inclusive*: **anyone who identifies as Mixed, has a trans-racial/cultural adoptive family, or who supports interracial/cultural relationships is welcome.** Our goals are to encourage emerging storytellers to explore the Mixed experience; introduce and encourage role models for future generations of Mixed artists; provide a safe and positive forum for honest discussions about race and culture; and to promote the Mixed experience as a valuable and important part of World History. We have chosen June 12th-15th in order to celebrate on June 12th, Loving Day (www.lovingday.org), the anniversary of the Loving decision in which the Supreme Court banned anti-miscegenation laws.

We are seeking your tax-deductible donations in support of this project. From The Heart Productions, a registered 501(c)(3), has agreed to sponsor the festival. Donations in increments of \$10 can be made on-line at www.mixedrootsfilmandliteraryfestival.org. Checks should be made payable and sent to:

**From the Heart Productions, Inc.
1455 Mandalay Beach
Oxnard, CA 93035**

Please specify “Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival” in the memo.

Please visit our website: www.mixedrootsfilmandliteraryfestival.org for updates.

Thank you for your support.

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