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## **Solo Show at 2013 Hollywood Fringe Festival Examines Notions of Racial Identity**

(Los Angeles, Calif.) — When actress and playwright Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni married the love of her life in 2006, her father did not walk her down the aisle. In fact, he declined to attend the wedding altogether.

Seeking to understand why he chose not to participate, DiGiovanni began a trek through family history — and time and space — that ultimately led to her M.F.A. thesis project: the multimedia one-woman play, “One Drop of Love: A Daughter’s Search for Her Father’s Racial Approval.”

DiGiovanni will perform the hour-long show on Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:30 p.m., Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:15 p.m. and Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Lounge Theatres ([www.hollywoodfringe.org/venues/11](http://www.hollywoodfringe.org/venues/11)). The cost of the two Friday performances is \$12 per ticket. The Sunday show is a fundraiser for MASC – Multiracial Americans of Southern California ([www.mascite.org](http://www.mascite.org)) – all proceeds (\$15 per ticket) will go to MASC. This show is also a Los Angeles celebration of Loving Day ([www.lovingday.org](http://www.lovingday.org)).

Incorporating filmed images, photographs, and animation DiGiovanni tells the story of how the notion of race came into existence in the United States, and its effects on her relationship with her father. To tell her story, DiGiovanni travels back in time to the first US census in 1790, to cities across the United States, and to West and East Africa, where both father and daughter spent time in search of their racial roots.

A leading activist on issues related to mixed cultures and ethnicities, DiGiovanni is an actor, comedian, producer, and educator. She developed “One Drop of Love” as the thesis project for her Master of Fine Arts degree in film, television, and theater from California State University Los Angeles. She will use footage from her performances — the most recent was at the University of California, Santa Barbara — to produce a documentary film. DiGiovanni, who appeared in the Academy Award-winning film “Argo,” is also the co-creator, co-producer, and co-host of the award-winning weekly podcast Mixed Chicks Chat, and co-founder and co-producer of the Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival®.

“I grew up very enamored with my dad,” DiGiovanni recalled. “My parents divorced and separated when I was young, but I always wanted to be close to him.” After the divorce, she said, her father identified himself very closely with Pan-Africanism. “The house was filled with African art, and there was a negative view of white people,” she said. “I’d spend the summer with him acting like my mother didn’t exist. Later, I fell in love with a man who happens to be European, and my dad didn’t come to my wedding. And for a long, long time I’d been wanting to ask him why.”

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## ONE DROP OF LOVE 2-2-2

With the help of her father’s memoir manuscript, DiGiovanni began combing through her family history. “I wanted to dig deep to figure out how we came to this moment,” she said. That history took her far and wide. Over the course of the play, DiGiovanni takes on the personas of various family members — her father, mother, grandmother, brother — among others, all of whom help provide context for how it came to be that she got married without her father present. “Reading my dad’s memoir helped me to get to a place of acceptance.”

DiGiovanni said she hopes the play will be a catalyst for people in close — and even estranged — relationships to talk about race. “I want people to walk out and talk to their family members about race. We have to understand the impact it has on all of us. We’ve created this monster out of our belief that there is such a thing as ‘race,’ and that monster is racism.”

While the play tackles issues of multiracialism, DiGiovanni pointed out that the repercussions of not appreciating differences extend beyond race. “Everyone has a mixed something,” she said. “And that’s why I bring in the census. Every single person in the US is assigned a race. We are all affected by it.”

Director, Actor, Producer Ben Affleck, who grew up with DiGiovanni in Cambridge, MA attended the debut performances in Los Angeles and said, “Amazing performance, staging, autobiography and artistry, and an amazing meditation on race and examination of America. I am in awe.”

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