About the Author: Rena Heinrich is an Associate Professor of Theatre Practice in Critical Studies at the USC School of Dramatic Arts (SDA) and an affiliated professor of East Asian studies in the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. As an artist, her theatrical work has been produced in Los Angeles by the John Anson Ford Theater, The Latino Theater Company, East West Players, Company of Angels, Playwrights' Arena, Yoda Productions, Adriate at Play, Casa ruma, and Highways Performance Space, among others. She is also a contributor to the anthology Shape Shifters: Asian Writers Across TERRAINs of Race and Identity (University of Nebraska Press) and to The Beijing of America: Personal Narratives about Being Mixed Race in the 21st Century (Lilac Press).

About the Participants:
SanSan Kwan is Professor of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley. Her recent book, Race Demo: Love, Death, and Belonging in an International Collaboration (Oxford University Press, 2021), is winner of the 2022 de la Torre Bueno© Award. She is an author of American Buddhism and Ecologies of Tenderness: Asian Buddhist Poetry and Practice in the 20th Century (Oxford University Press, 2019); co-editor of Race and Role: The Mixed-Race Asian Experience in American Drama (Oxford University Press, 2017); and co-editor of the anthology Mixed-Race Asian American Plays (Rutgers University Press, 2023). The author will also be joined in conversation by SanSan Kwan (UC Berkeley) and Rebecca Chiyoko King-O’Riain (Maynooth University), moderated by Duncan Williams (USC) Co-organized by the USC School of Dramatic Arts and the USC East Asian Studies Center.

About the Book: Mixed-race Asian American plays are often overlooked for their failure to fit smoothly into racial categories, rendering mixed-race drama inconsequential in conversations about race and performance. Since the 19th century, however, these plays have long advocated for the social significance of multiracial Asian people. Race and Role: The Mixed-Race Asian Experience in American Drama traces the shifting identities of multiracial Asian figures in theater from the late-19th century to the present day and explores the ways that mixed-race Asian identity transforms our understanding of race. Mixed-Race Asian playwrights harness theater’s generative power to enact performances of “double liminality” and expose the absurd tenacity with which society clings to a tenuous racial scaffolding. MORE

About the Author: Rebecca Chiyoko King-O’Riain is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Maynooth University. Her research interests include globalization, popular culture, emotions, and technology; racial/ethnic beauty pageants; critical race theory; and qualitative methods. She is the author of Pure Beauty: Auditioning Race in Japanese American Beauty Pageants (University of Minnesota Press, 2006) and editor of Global Mixed Race (NYU Press, 2014). Her research explores globalized interpersonal and interactive forms of bodily culture through pageant-altering practices in Asia and Europe, beauty pageants, and Asian popular culture (Korean and Japanese popular music and dramas).