Hello listeners, this is ISC ensemble member and Artistic Associate for Social Justice Carene Rose Mekertichyan. Thank you all for joining me for ISC’s October Community Action Update. These monthly episodes feature social justice initiatives and ways you can serve your local Los Angeles community and beyond.

This month, we celebrated Indigenous People’s Day. There are a number of actions you can support that center the sacred sites and land stewardship of native people.

Indigenous Hawaiians are currently in a fight to protect Mauna Kea. Mauna Kea is one of the tallest and most sacred mountains and standing at 13,796 ft above sea level, it is the highest point in the Pacific Ocean. It is the tallest mountain on Earth when measured from its base at the bottom of the sea. It is also home to many Hawaiian gods and goddesses, and the site of a number of burials and shrines.

The Kanaka Maoli people have advocated for the protection of Mauna Kea for decades. Despite years of mass protests, worldwide demonstrations, lawsuits, petitions, and thousands of both oral and written testimonies all saying “NO” to the building of Thirty Meter Telescope atop Mauna Kea, the University of Hawaii has instead prioritized the building of TMT on summits sacred to the Kanaka Maoli people.

To take action and make your voice heard, go to: maunakea.konveio.com

Despite the protests of indigenous people and environmental activists, the Line 3 pipeline has begun to pump tar sands from Alberta, Canada to Superior, Wisconsin. The pipeline is set to be double the previous line's flow, adding up to 370,000 more barrels of oil per day. This is the equivalent of the total carbon dioxide daily emissions of 16-18 million cars every year the pipeline operates. Line 3 also violates the treaty rights of the Anishinaabe people and endangers the population’s wild rice watersheds.

You can take action by going to: action.lakotalaw.org/action/stop-line-3

You can also support the people of Red Mountain who are currently fighting to protect Thacker Pass, or Peehee mu'huh, which is sacred land to the Northern Paiute and Western Shoshone people, in addition to being a critical wildlife habitat. Lithium Nevada Corp. plans to build an open pit lithium mine with a project area of 17,933 acres in the pass.

To support efforts to stop the lithium mine, go to: protectthackerpass.org

At the start of September, the LAMC 41.18 ordinance went into effect. This harmful ordinance essentially criminalizes homelessness, by banning sitting, sleeping, and lying down in many public spaces throughout LA. All but two LA City Councilmembers voted for the ordinance and many continue to advocate for additional banned locations. This Wednesday alone, there is a proposal to add an additional 15 sites.

To learn more about the ordinance and contact your Councilmember, you can access the #HomesNotZones toolkit at: tinyurl.com/noon4118

The Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission has drafted new borders for our 13 districts that would harm the representation of Latine and Armenian communities. The new West San Fernando Valley district, currently called “4-or-2,” contains Canoga Park, Winnetka, Reseda, and Lake Balboa and would be represented by either Councilmember Krekorian or Councilmember Raman (both of whom do not live in the district).

The majority Latine district had local landmarks such as the Warner Center carved out and placed in District 3, the predominantly white district to the south. Voters in Canoga Park last voted for City Council in 2017 but under the proposed map, voters will be unable to vote for council until 2024, a seven-year span between votes.

This redistricting proposal would also divide sections of Van Nuys, North Hollywood, and Valley Village (currently within District 2), which is the most densely populated Armenian community in Los Angeles. The community would be split into three districts, drastically reducing the representation of the Armenian community in each.
While the City Council Redistricting Commission is no longer accepting written map feedback online or via email, you can still present a community impact statement at their next public meeting this Thursday October 28th at 6PM.

We must speak out before gerrymandering becomes the norm in LA County.

For information on redistricting and how to call into the commission’s public meeting, go to: laccrc2021.org/

Maroon Arts & Culture is currently fundraising to meet the goal of covering 3 months of office rent and expenses. Maroon AC is a Black founded and centered theatre company that is part of the Support Black Theatre family and most recently hosted this summer’s Juneteenth Jubilee. Founded in 2019, they have not been approved for any Covid relief funding and are now turning to our community to help fill the systemic gaps in financial assistance seen by many Black arts organizations.

Please contribute to the fundraiser by November 1st by going to: gofund.me/47594afa

Last month we talked about the new Los Angeles Anti-Racist Theatre Standards, or LA ARTS, which is a set of standards drafted by a collective of LA theatre artists dedicated to true equity and systemic change in LA theatre institutions and communities. Our collective of standards co-authors is hosting meetings on zoom every Tuesday at 10am.

This space is open to all theater art makers in the area, so if you are interested in taking part, email me at carene@iscla.org. To read the full set of standards, go to LATheatreStandards.com

Finally, our local community and the entertainment community suffered the devastating and sudden loss of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins when she was killed on the set of the film Rust. Halyna was an incredible artist, wife, and mother to one of my former students. Please consider donating to the Gofundme for her family and to the scholarship created in her honor at the American Film Institute.

You can donate by going to: afi.com/halyna-hutchins-scholarship-fund

Thank you so much for listening to this month’s Community Action Update. To see ISC’s social justice initiatives head to iscla.org/justice where you can also find links and information about the organizations and initiatives I mentioned today. Be sure to also follow us on social media @indyshakes.

Are there initiatives in our community you want featured on our Community Action Update in November? Email me carene@iscla.org and that's Carene, C-A-R-E-N-E at ISCLA.org, and I will add it to my list. Here at ISC we still have quite a bit of programming, so be sure to also watch our digital immersive production the last syllable which explores the world of Macbeth. Tickets are also live for our in person screenings of Live at the Porpentine!, which is our feature film production of Shakespeare’s The Comedy of Errors. Until we see you in person again, please stay safe my fellow Angelenos.