

**AUSTIN WEEK 2017**  
**LETTRES D'INTRODUCTION**

## AUSTIN WEEK FRANCE

Équipe du festival

À l'attention des  
Élus de la ville d'Angers,

Le bureau d'Austin Angers Creative nous a fait part du courrier qui lui a été adressé le 05 mai 2017 dans lequel vous faites état de la fin et du non renouvellement de la convention de subventionnement qui vous liait. Cette convention concernait pour partie le festival Austin Week.

Ce festival est né au mois de janvier de l'année 2015. Il représente aujourd'hui un événement qui, sur ce territoire, en France et dans le Monde, n'a pas son pendant. C'est un format unique.

Nous souhaitons le faire durer.

Austin Angers Creative a fait le choix d'une pause et nous saluons la décision de son président. Cependant, le festival Austin Week ne peut pas souffrir d'une année sans événement. Cela mettrait à mal le travail entamé il y a seulement 2 ans et nous priverait de la charnière importante que représente une troisième année.

Aussi nous avons fait le choix de conduire une édition 2017 du festival Austin Week dans notre ville d'Angers.

Cette décision s'appuie sur la création d'une association *Austin Week France* dédiée au festival et pour laquelle la présidente, Samantha Phelps (d'*Austin, Tx.*), adresse une première vision dans un courrier que je joins à celui-ci.

Par ailleurs, nous avons lancé une campagne de financement qui permettra de faire vivre le festival.

Cette décision et cette nouvelle structure ne remettra jamais en cause un point fondamental : c'est la ville d'Angers qui a fait naître cette relation transatlantique et il lui reviendra toujours la décision de participer ou non à l'aventure qui en a découlée. Pour le sens, pour en garantir le rayonnement et pour tous les angevins qui pourront rejoindre cette dynamique, nous accueillerons toujours avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme la présence de la ville d'Angers et de ses élus à nos côtés dans l'élaboration de ce festival. Ce de quelques manières que ce soit tant que vous les voyez conformes à l'exercice de votre mandat.

Avec la même volonté, nous nous tenons prêt pour partager toutes les informations du festival permettant l'appréciation des services de la ville et de l'agglomération. Nous pensons qu'il y a beaucoup à apprendre les uns des autres dans le partage d'objectifs opérationnels.

Notre ambition pour ce festival est grande et c'est la même depuis le début : faire briller Angers à la lumière de ses connections mondiales.

Nous restons à votre disposition pour une rencontre,

Cordialement,

Germain Kpakou, membre de l'équipe Austin Week.



Monday, May 15, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Samantha Phelps. I'm an event producer based in Austin, TX, and I've been fortunate to work with Austin Angers Creative on a variety of projects and cultural exchanges for the last five years. In 2013, I met François Delaunay, then Director of Le Chabada, and my colleague Germain Kpakou via Twitter. They wanted to introduce the newly formed Austin Angers Creative (AAC) to SXSW and I've had a crush on France since the age of 15 - it was an instant match. We worked together to introduce AAC to press, industry and City of Austin officials during SXSW and that September I visited Angers for the first time as a liaison between Les Accroche-Coeurs and Austin artists The Moonhangers. My zeal for these projects was intense before I ever saw The Loire in person, but after that first visit my interest became a passion.

In September 2015, Kpakou organized the inaugural Austin Week. I traveled to Angers with Project ATX6, two tattoo artists and two chefs. In total we were 12 people that made up the entirety of the festival programming, but the community response was instantaneous and positive. The following year, we welcomed over 60 creative individuals including chefs, sculptors, painters, photographers, musicians, yoga and dance instructors, and journalists. The growth in programming (over 200% in one year!) and support of the festival in both our cities was astounding:

<http://kutx.org/features/austin-week-in-angers-austin-music-in-france>  
<http://www.austinchronicle.com/daily/music/2016-09-16/the-french-connection/>  
<http://www.austinchronicle.com/music/2016-09-23/playback-austin-week-in-angers-france/>  
[http://www.angersmag.info/The-French-connection-des-moments-en-or-a-l-Austin-Week\\_a12687.html](http://www.angersmag.info/The-French-connection-des-moments-en-or-a-l-Austin-Week_a12687.html)

In November of 2015, I along with my partner Susan Parras, hosted Angers Day here in Austin. With open arms, we welcomed our two talents from Angers: Premiers Plans Festival Director Xavier Massé and musicians Cherry Plum. As Austin Week 2016 grew, so did our reciprocal festival: Angers Day became Angers Week and we welcomed over 40 Angevine professionals, musicians, a chef and a brewmaster to participate in the cultural collaboration last November:

Anger's VedeTT live in KUTX Studio 1A:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFKcXALrCj>

<http://www.austinchronicle.com/daily/music/2016-11-08/angers-city-limits/>

Additionally, last year, Parras, myself, and Chris Brecht of Project ATX6 formed our own branch of Austin Angers Creative here in Texas (AACtx). Becoming an independent Non-Profit Organization allows us to officially petition the City of Austin and the State of Texas for cultural funding. To better facilitate our festival in regards to City of Austin grant cycles, we will be moving Angers Week to April of 2018 to align with New French Cinema Week (Premiers Plans). We feel this will allow our production teams time to equally develop both festivals, as well as expose our Angevine artists to a wider, Francophile audience.

In the beginning of 2017, we have entered into a new relation with 4 cities of the world asking for our festival model "Austin Week". Oita in Japan, Saltillo in Mexico, a group of cities in the Caribbean and the large city of Toronto in Canada. This made us realize we have been building a successful program that we want to pursue.

When news of the City of Angers' withdrawal of monetary support for Austin Week 2017 was confirmed, Kpakou, myself and our production team went into hyper-drive: we knew we would have to find funding no matter the odds. In the third year of our festival exchange, our team and network of dedicated artists and staff continues to grow, and we're beginning to see a true comprehension and deep appreciation by the general public for our Sister City collaboration. We cannot let it fall this year. We are proud of the work that we have accomplished and want to share our success with Hôtel de Ville.

Personally, it is disheartening to hear this news. To my eyes, the City of Angers has always set the standard for creative sponsorship and funding of the arts within our Sister City relationship. I feel that Austin has much to learn in this regard. So while I respect your decision, I see a future where we can work together again with more dialogue, collaboration and transparency. I would welcome your public support of Austin Week 2017 as we move forward with production of the festival through private funding avenues.

The Austin Week / Angers Week festival exchanges have grown to a point where our interests and the goals of the festival require direct representation. Thus we have decided to form a new non-profit organization, Austin Week France, and I will be representing the interests of the organization as President. We hope that by providing a direct line to our projects, we can once again collaborate with the City of Angers and reevaluate our common action for Austin Week in 2018.

Respectfully,

Samantha Phelps  
Austin Week France  
President