

Date: 31.12.2011

Ferdinand Richard
Director
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41 rue Jobin, 13003
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France

Dear Ferdinand,

The result of 'VIP' session in Rio proves it is possible to build a way to think and work together among different cultures, experiences, artistic disciplines and languages.

However, I have a very serious question for you – *Do you really understand what was being produced in Rio?*

Because I am not satisfied with our collaboration for DigiBAP project.

I feel a constant battle with AMI while you, the producer, is responsible to support me, the artistic director.

When I look in retrospect the exchanges we had, I see two fundamental drawbacks:

One is the gap between our understanding and approach of DigiBAP.

Second is the way AMI delivers the production, which I will give concrete examples in *Paragraph III- Evaluation of 'VIP' Session in Rio*.

In this letter, I will first explain our differences when conducting the DigiBAP project, then, propose how I want to work with AMI in the future.

I hope you have the patience to try to understand this discussion is not only about administration. It is also an invitation to build a common way for working together.

I got involved in DigiBAP because I believe the values and principles this project stands for.

The 'VIP' Open Call I developed focus on the need and engagement in the critical reflection and susceptible creativity in crisis time.

For me, such engagement is essential not only with the participating 'VIP's but also in practice among ourselves in DigiBAP preparation and implementation.

But this was not possible with AMI since your main concern was to define the power structure – the strict responsibility of production, communication and artistic direction.

You have never tried to share your reflections or thoughts with me about our collaborations (including the Creative Incubator Workshop at Oi Kabum in Rio last year). On the other hand, you also never asked for my feedback or informed me the feedback you received from Alliance Française or other partners. As if finally it was only about publicity and modernity for AMI.

This way of thinking and acting is completely in contrary with the philosophy of DigiBAP – to share our thinking and find innovative solutions together.

For you, no doubt DigiBAP is a residency program over the long list of AMI's initiatives. And, as such, it has no more importance than previous ones.

For me, it is very different, these reflections and evaluations are the responsibility one has when one enters a collaborative relationship with others. And such responsibility is not about power or administration; it is driven by the ethic we pursuit.

I am not afraid to claim the success of 'VIP' session in Rio is largely due to each 'VIP's and my personal commitment, well in advance and far beyond the DigiBAP contract. There were major production misconducts in Rio which should not happen again in the future 'VIP' sessions. This also includes your delayed payment for DigiBAP online platform which now seriously jeopardizes my credibility to my team.

I will not continue if AMI continues to deliver DigiBAP production in the same way, I seriously invite you to change with following proposals:

I. Financial Terms

II. Production Requirements for Successful 'VIP' Sessions

III. Evaluation of 'VIP' Session in Rio

I. Financial Terms

1. All the payment for DigiBAP online platform (800 euro) and 'VIP' Rio session will be paid no later than 11.02.2012.
2. For Marseille and Dakar sessions, I will receive the full per diem (500 euro) and part of the artist fee (1000 euro) via bank transfer 3 business days in advance of the starting date.

II. Production Requirements for Successful 'VIP' Sessions

See Appendix 1

III. Evaluation of 'VIP' Session in Rio

In my opinion, there are several major misconducts for the production in Rio, see list below, which should not be repeated in future sessions. I would like to hear your feedback about these issues before 13.01.2012.

In addition, I gave Elodie important contacts at Digital Culture House in Sao Paulo. They have the finance and facility to sponsor and host the next 'VIP' session in Sao Paulo, please keep me informed with the meeting results.

1. For the entire 10-day session (01-10.12.2011), we only had total of 8 hour of technical support. Clearly, this was not what we agreed for the working conditions. Such lack of technical support caused lots unnecessary anxiety and stress to participants.

On 01.12, we had sound technician for 1 hour and suggested technician (Aymeric) for 2 hours.

On 09.12, Aymeric assisted the video editing for 3 hours and he complained a lot about the video conversion 'VIP' did during his absence.

On 10.12, sound technician for 2 hours to set up sound system for DigiBAP presentation.

2. We never received any concrete information about electronic recycling materials in Rio. AF or Elodie also did not present the recycling artist they know in Rio. Luckily, I found a local recycling center through my own contacts in Digital Cultura Festival on the 3rd day after the session started. Without such information, most installations would not be possible to realize, it would seriously jeopardize 4 out 8 'VIP's' (Ricardo, Philippe, Thiago, Boris) artwork.

Note: This information is also crucial for Fensu and Jean's work.

3. On 05.12 (Day 4), when we received lots recycling electronic materials for free, I proposed to Elodie to invite local recycling center staff to DigiBAP presentation and she agreed. The staff was interested in collecting 'VIP's' artwork for the recycling center. At the end, Elodie called the recycling center 2 hour before the DigiBAP presentation when the electronic invitation was ready on 06.12.
4. Very often 'VIP's' and I ended up using our own equipments because AMI's equipments were not ready i.e. missing cables/memory cards, no battery, or full memory cards. In addition, most people could not find the proper equipments due to poor organization. For example, we didn't even know there was additional hard drive available till the 8th day.
5. We did not have exclusive usage of the house we stayed in Rio, the owner's family dropped by whenever they want which disturbed several important 'VIP' team meetings. On 06.12 (Day 5), the owner suddenly asked the musicians to remove all their equipments and not to use any tables in the lab. When this happened, neither Elodie nor any local assistance was present in the house; Elodie arrived 3 hour later after we called her.
6. Boris was trapped in the CDG airport due to transit visa problem, which delayed his arrival to Rio till the 3rd day of the session. The first 3 days of the session were most important for team building. He missed all the presentations by other 'VIP's' and it was very demanding for him to catch up with different initiatives afterwards.
7. Elodie initiated daily one-on-one production meeting with me but most of the time she didn't come; sometimes she didn't even cancel the meeting in advance or explain her absence. Consequently, her absence caused delays and miscomprehension of production needs for the session.

For example, she called urgently on 06.12 (Day 5) asking all 'VIP's' to present a visual for the DigiBAP presentation invitation within 30 mins when most 'VIP's' at the time just woke up and getting ready for the team meeting. Elodie was aware of deadline and such task could be easily accomplished if she could plan it with me in advance.

On 07.12 (Day 6), I told her I felt I was left alone with 'VIP's without much support and it's not okay to continue like this. Although she agreed to make an effort to attend our future meetings, this lapse has serious impact on AMI's professional reputation.

8. I did not receive my per diem in cash like other 'VIP's which caused a lot inconvenience. Only till 06.12 (Day 5), the per diem was received in SideBySide Studio e.V. bank account which was impossible to make any foreign withdraws due to the administrative limitation on institutional account. Such inconvenience could be easily avoided if I was informed about the bank transfer well in advance, it is very unpleasant when I had to borrow money each time even when buying a bottle of water.
9. On my last day in Rio, Elodie hang up on me when I called to ask about transport arrangement to the airport. Prior to the call, I sent 2 emails to confirm the arrangement but no reply. At the end, I had to find a taxi on my own in the rain 2 hour before my flight boarding time while worrying not having enough cash (since I didn't receive the full per diem in cash).

Note: AMI is still responsible for the taxi reimbursement.

10. AMI is responsible for DigiBAP communcation and PR. However, all the documentation material in Rio were managed by me and Philippe because no one was in charge. In addition, DigiBAP online platform has been ready since 23.11.2011, so far there was no information published by AMI, not even DigiBAP partner's information.

To conclude, I take the risk to be honest with you because I believe each crisis can be an opportunity to change and advance. More, I must defend the spirit of 'VIP' open call – to find a common way to work and think together through Value, Innovation and Perspectives. I sincerely hope you will respond with fruitful thoughts.

Truly,

I-Wei Li
DigiBAP Artistic Director

Appendix 1

On-Site Production Requirements for Successful 'VIP' Sessions

1. Minimum 1 local technician available full time on site during the entire session. This technician will assist with video editing, sound system set up, audio recording/editing, and circuit bending when necessary.
2. AMI on-site production manager is responsible to have all technical equipments ready for use at the beginning of the day, meaning, memory cards cleared, all video camera and audio recorder's batteries (total 4) are fully charged, no missing cables.
3. AMI on-site production managers is responsible to resource and allocate the materials needed for artistic creation, including recycling materials, found objects, textiles and additional technical materials such as small engines, sound system. Such information will be given 1 week in advance to I-Wei with concrete details such as address, opening hours.
4. AMI on-site production manger will inform me the local production budget for the presentation 1 week in advance before starting date.
5. AMI on-site production manager or local assistant will document the process of daily activities and artistic creation daily.
6. AMI on-site production manager or local assistant will take care of all the documentation materials and upload min 10 files on DigiBAP online platform daily during the session.
7. During the VIP session, AMI on-site production manager will keep close contact with me, min 30 mins per day for private meeting in order to be in line with production needs.
8. AMI will take care of the arrival and departure of all VIPs and Artistic Director, including visa and airport transport.
9. Lunch and dinner will be prepared daily via local resources during the entire session. 'VIP's will only dine out when special program is scheduled.
10. The lab venue is designated for 'VIP' session only, not interfered by other activities. Lab access is only given to 'VIP's, local partner, assistant, technician, and AMI on-site producer. Any guest visits must inform DigiBAP Artistic Director in advance and ask for permission.