

Swifts Art project for synaesthetic perception of migratory species V2.0

About Swifts:

Swifts | A Bird That Doesn't Perch, Stand or Walk by All Things Birdie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuhUAhE-Uuo>

Common Swift Worldwide

http://www.commonswift.org/common_swift.html

Project statement:

- From the artist's view:
Artists will provide an artistic perspective of the flying Swift birds by depicting a synaesthetic response to them (or create a simulated synaesthetic interpretation, if an artist is not a synaesthete). This will be considered as a way to express a relationship between nature and humans.
If an artist's culture also has a specific view point of or relationship to the Swifts, this can be in addition to or interwoven into the synaesthetic response.
- From the Swifts' view:
Consider the ornithology and nature of the Swifts. With this knowledge in mind, and within reason of our anthropomorphized perspectives, might the Swifts think about humans while navigating both the natural and human-made worlds?
- The flying Swifts will connect the participating artistic group through shared creativity, neurodiversity and cultural diversity. This project will benefit people and the environment by bringing awareness to various relationships to nature through unnoticed elements or from providing different emotive and perceptive experiences of it. This project is in line with the UN 2030 sustainable development goals (please refer to [the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)).

Participants: Artists from different regions and countries who observe Swifts

Artworks to be exhibited:

All kinds of art including paintings, drawings, photos, sculptures, installations and videos. In the exhibition, there will be two types of entries (please see more on this below):

- Collective artwork installation (*required*)
- Individual artworks (*optional*)

Collective artwork installation (required)

A large installation containing a group of objects on the ground space. These objects will be placed in a map arrangement (to be done by the curators).

In each object, three artistic works will be provided:

A. One-minute video MP4(16:9)

A one-minute video MP4 (16:9) of flying Swifts taken at the artist's geological site, with the landscape or environment in the background. This short video will be edited and uploaded to the exhibition's Vimeo / Instagram profile by the organizers., The accompanying body of text below each upload will have the artist's recording date and place included. QR codes for the videos will be generated and installed by the organizers so that the site-specific context will be in relationship to the artists' interpretations.

B. Graphic design for the name of Swift in artist's own mother tongue

Each artist must provide a colourful synaesthetic design, either as a digital design or drawing as JPG.

C. A drawing triggered by flying Swifts on A4 paper

Each artist will visualize their synaesthesia experience (real or simulated/synthesized) triggered by flying Swifts and their sound, shape, motion, colour, mirror-touch, etc. In this case, a short description in 300 words or less must be provided.

Important agreement between the organizers and participating artists

In a short, written statement, each applicant must declare that he/she/they are the artist and that the artist's works were created for this project are authentic and original. In this statement, each artist must also grant the organizers (Artecittà and Swift Art Project team) the right to place his/her/their works, videos, photos and text online and in the physical exhibition free of charge. The organizers must also be granted the right to edit the participating artists' videos, photos and text for the sole purpose of the Vimeo/Instagram and the physical Swift exhibition. Any copyright fees have to be paid by the artists themselves, if it occurs.

Exhibition material and message for participating artists:

- 1. Three things must be provided: A) One-minute video MP4 (16:9) including the basic information of the recording (date, place and name of video maker); B) Graphic design of Swift name in artist's own language; C) The drawing triggered by the flying Swifts with a short description 300 words or less.**
- 2. Artist's CV / Statement in 100 words or less, personal photo and one typical landscape photo where he/she discovered swifts will be provided.**
- 3. Artist's short-written agreement is required granting the organizers to put their works etc. online/exhibition free of charge**
- 4. Artists' contact details will be provided: name, city/country, email, or Instagram**

profile (optional)

5. **Artists must submit their exhibition material in an email attachment to María José de Córdoba Serrano, Ninghui Xiong, Timothy Layden and Caitlin Mkhasibe before 22 August 2025 for proposal review.** The original drawing will be sent to Fundación Internacional Artecittà, who will be the exhibition organizer after selection confirmation.

Individual art works (optional)

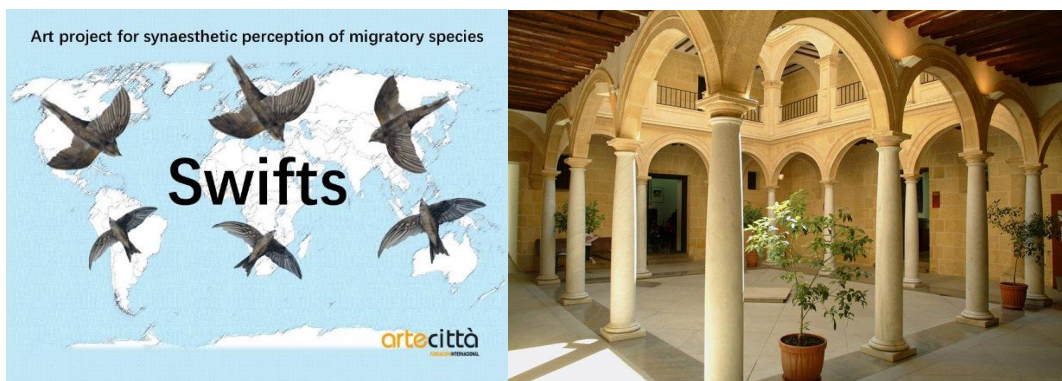
- Artists also can provide their creative works related to the theme as paintings/installations/photos for exhibition. These can either be figurative or abstract. Collaborative works between artists are welcome, as long as artistic responses reflect the correct time of the migration points of the flying Swifts.
- **In such case, artists must send their proposal/ images in an email to María José de Córdoba Serrano, Ninghui Xiong, Timothy Layden and Caitlin Mkhasibe before 22 August 2025 for review and selection.**

About the exhibition:

It has been planned that this project will be a part of "**Synaesthesia and Visual Arts**", **Exposición Antológica-Exhibition 2025** at Palacia Abacial in Alcalá la Real, Jaén (Spain) 23 -31 October, a parallel activity of *VIII International Congress Synaesthesia Science and Art* 23 -25 October 2025. Later, the project exhibition may become a movable one exhibited in any other city/country where Swifts migrate.

Project contact:

- Ninghui Xiong, email: ninghuixiong1964@outlook.com
- Caitlin Mkhasibe, email: caitlin@caitlinmkhasibe.com
- María José de Córdoba Serrano, email: info@artecitta.es
- Timothy B. Layden, email: timothyblayden@gmail.com



*Swifts Art Project, part of "Synaesthesia and Visual Arts", Exposición Antológica-Exhibition 2025
Venue: Palacio Abacial Alcalá la Real, Jaén, Spain*

Swifts (Ted Hughes' poem from *Season Songs*, Faber, 1976)

*Fifteenth of May. Cherry blossom. The Swifts
Materialize at the tip of a long scream
Of needle. 'Look! They're back! Look!' And they're gone
On a steep*

*Controlled scream of skid
Round the house-end and away under the cherries. Gone.
Suddenly flickering in sky summit, three or four together,
Gnat-whisp frail, and hover-searching, and listening*

*For air-chills – are they too early? With a bowing
Power-thrust to left, then to right, then a flicker they
Tilt into a slide, a tremble for balance,
Then a lashing down disappearance*

*Behind elms.
They've made it again,
Which means the globe's still working, the Creation's
Still waking refreshed, our summer's
Still all to come —
And here they are, here they are again
Erupting across yard stones
Shrapnel-scatter terror. Frog-gapers,
Speedway goggles, international mobsters —*

*A bolas of three or four wire screams
Jockeying across each other
On their switchback wheel of death.
They swat past, hard-fledged*

*Veer on the hard air, toss up over the roof,
And are gone again. Their mole-dark labouring,
Their lunatic limber scrambling frenzy
And their whirling blades*

*Sparkle out into blue —
Not ours any more.
Rats ransacked their nests so now they shun us.
Round luckier houses now
They crowd their evening dirt-track meetings,*

*Racing their discords, screaming as if speed-burned,
Head-height, clipping the doorway
With their leaden velocity and their butterfly lightness,
Their too much power, their arrow-thwack into the eaves.*

*Every year a first-fling, nearly flying
Misfit flopped in our yard,
Groggily somersaulting to get airborne.
He bat-crawled on his tiny useless feet, tangling his flails*

*Like a broken toy, and shrieking thinly
Till I tossed him up — then suddenly he flowed away under
His bowed shoulders of enormous swimming power,
Slid away along levels wobbling*

*On the fine wire they have reduced life to,
And crashed among the raspberries.
Then followed fiery hospital hours
In a kitchen. The moustached goblin savage*

*Nested in a scarf. The bright blank
Blind, like an angel, to my meat-crumbs and flies.
Then eyelids resting. Wasted clingers curled.
The inevitable balsa death.
Finally burial
For the husk
Of my little Apollo —*

*The charred scream
Folded in its huge power.*