

Swifts Art project for synaesthetic perception of migratory species

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 viewpoint 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. Reels posted on Instagram

A one-minute video in his/her geological site, with the flying Swifts and the landscape or environment in the background. This short video will be posted on Instagram first. In the post's text, each artist will describe their recording date and place, any idea or feelings could be included. At the end of the post, the following hashtag must be added: **#SwiftsArtProjectSynaesthesia**
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 Swifts in artist's own mother tongue

Each artist must provide a colourful grapheme synaesthesia, 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 must be provided.

Important message for participating artists:

- 1. Three things must be provided: A) Link of reels in Instagram; B) Graphic design of Swift name in artist's own language; C) The drawing triggered by the flying Swifts with a short description in 300 words.**
- 2. Artists' contact details will be provided: name, city/ country, email and Instagram profile.**
- 3. Artists must send an email to María José de Córdoba Serrano, Ninghui Xiong, Timothy Layden and Caitlin Mkhasibe before end of August 2025 for proposal review.** The original drawing will be sent to Fundación Internacional Artécittà, who will be the exhibition organizer after selection confirmation.

Individual art works *(optional)*

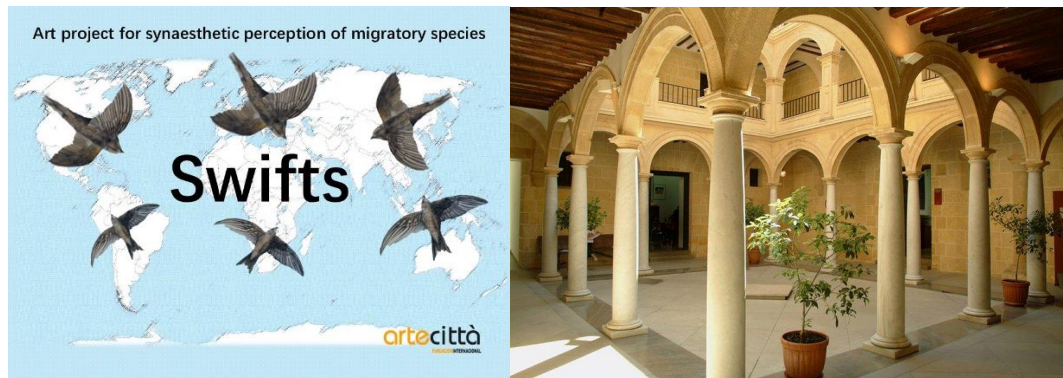
- Artists also can provide their creative works related to the theme as paintings/ installations/ photos for exhibition. These can either be figurative or abstract. Collaborative works between artists are welcome, as long as artistic responses reflect the correct time of the migration points of the flying 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 end of August 2025 for review and selection.**

About the exhibition:

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

Project contact:

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



*Swifts Art Project, part of "Synesthesia 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-pling, 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.*