

Press Release

The Brooklyn Museum Names Outdoor Plaza in Honor of Philanthropist and Collector Iris Cantor



First Saturday festivities on the Brooklyn Museum's Iris Cantor Plaza, October 2023. (Photo: Matthew Carasella)

The Brooklyn Museum celebrated the newly established Iris Cantor Plaza, named in honor of Cantor's lifelong commitment to Brooklyn and the Museum, on October 7. Through the generous support of the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, the Museum's outdoor plaza will continue to be a nexus between the Museum and its surrounding community, providing a space to gather for impactful programming, exhibitions, special events, and more.

Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director, says, "Iris Cantor, a globally renowned collector, was born and raised just down the road from the Brooklyn Museum. Throughout her life, she has been an incredible friend and generous supporter of the Museum, from gifting our renowned collection of sixty-six Auguste Rodin sculptures and drawings to endowing public programs and publications. Now, our beloved outdoor plaza will honor Iris and her enduring legacy of support for the Museum while undergoing a green transformation, bringing even greater joy to the millions who visit."

"Like so many other Brooklynites, I hold a special place in my heart for the Brooklyn Museum," says Cantor. "It is here, with my sisters as children, that my love of the arts took root. This Museum sparked what grew to be a lifelong quest to share art with the public, and I am deeply honored to name the Museum's public square—a gathering place for so many celebrations and the entryway to each visitor's personal exploration of art."

The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation has supported a wide range of exhibitions, publications, educational initiatives, and capital projects at the Brooklyn Museum. Notably, in 1991 the foundation funded the creation of the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, a more than 400-seat, 4,700-square-foot theater that hosts much of the

Brooklyn Museum

Museum's lively public programming. The Foundation has also funded a variety of special exhibitions at the Museum, with subjects ranging from French Impressionists to Japanese architects, and has bestowed numerous gifts of art on the Museum's collection. Iris Cantor served as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees from 1991 to 2001, working tirelessly to secure key funding for the Museum's operations.

The new Iris Cantor Plaza has recently been transformed. It is now home to a bustling, eco-friendly wildflower garden, designed by Brook Klausing and Rebecca McMackin, with refreshed landscaping, native plants, and integrated seating. The space also hosts regular programming including outdoor yoga classes and art-making for families, as well as rotating exhibitions, such as this summer's installation of photographs by Brooklyn-based artist Jamel Shabazz.

About the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation

The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation was established in the 1970s to promote and encourage the recognition and appreciation of excellence in the arts; to enhance cultural life internationally through support of art exhibitions, scholarship, and the endowment of galleries at major museums around the world; and to support biomedical research. Iris and B. Gerald Cantor's dedication to arts patronage is represented in galleries, sculpture gardens, endowed curatorial positions, and scholarship programs at such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, North Carolina Museum of Art, Stanford University Museum of Art, and Brooklyn Museum, as well as the gallery at the College of the Holy Cross.