

# THE INDEPENDENT



## **Five-year-old Iris Grace is raising awareness of autism through her extraordinary paintings**

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/fiveyearold-iris-grace-is-raising-awareness-of-autism-through-her-extraordinary-paintings-9761351.html>

A five-year-old girl with autism has garnered praise across Europe, Asia and America for her astonishing artwork.

Iris Grace, who lives with her family in Leicestershire, began painting last year, and has already been praised by buyers, collectors and galleries for her work's intense colour, immediacy, and open composition.

Her paintings are sold to private art collectors in the UK and around the world for thousands of pounds each, with all profits going towards art materials and therapy.

Arabella Carter-Johnson, Iris's mother, said that Iris loves being outside and that she can see "so much of nature in her paintings".



Iris with her cat Thula “She

will watch water, trees, wind, leaves, flowers, birds, clouds... she is so interested in movement and how it changes things.”

She added that Iris is “very musical” and has been since she was a baby.

“It was the one thing that always calmed her,” she said. “Iris is particularly into classical music at the moment and knows all of the orchestra instruments. She adores the violin.”

Iris’s cat Thula is another source of inspiration, and features regularly in her work, such as her painting ‘Raining Cats’.



‘Raining Cats’ by Iris Grace

“There have been a lot of references to Monet because of the Impressionistic style. We have had many artists, dealers and galleries contact us who are very complimentary about her work which is lovely,”

Iris's mother said.

“For us though the joy that Iris gets from creating her pieces is the highlight, how it changes her mood, how happy it makes her.”

Due to a lack of awareness, people with autism and their friends, family and carers often struggle to explain just how strong an impact it can have on a person’s life. Iris's mother said that her daughter had great success with play therapy, music therapy, and now a new form of speech therapy which uses video, created by a company called [Gemiini](#).

“By following Iris’s interests, her ‘spark’, I have been able to engage her in many things,’ Iris's mother said.

"We have started our own activity club that supports children with autism, and run that every Saturday morning."



Iris at work Celebrities such as

Ashton Kutcher have shared Iris’s work on social media, while three-time BAFTA award winner Olivia Colman showed her support by reading a poem for a [video about Iris](#).

Several high-profile figures are active in raising awareness of autism, including actor Daniel Radcliffe, who is a patron for the Autism Research Trust.

“I am sure his [Ashton Kutcher’s] post has had a huge impact, said Iris's mother. "Our society now is so interested in what celebrities say or do that any comments from them will undoubtedly raise awareness."

*You can learn more about Iris's work on her [website](#)*