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The “End of An Era”: In Remembrance of Anya Tish Gallery

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DECEMBER 9, 2025([HTTPS://GLASSTIRE.COM/2025/12/09/](https://glasstire.com/2025/12/09/))

On opening night of *End of An Era*, the last exhibition of the Anya Tish Gallery before it closes permanently, the gallery was packed full. Shoulder to shoulder viewers, sipping white wine and hugging old friends carried a naturally somber mood, however, the room contained the feeling of a family reunion of sorts. This reunion included three decades of dedicated artists, loyal collectors, friends, colleagues, and admirers. After [Anya Tish](https://glasstire.com/2024/06/25/anya-tish-1950-2024/) (<https://glasstire.com/2024/06/25/anya-tish-1950-2024/>)’s passing last summer, in her hometown of Krakow, Poland, the gallery recently announced it would be [closing at the behest of Mark Tish](https://glasstire.com/2025/10/11/anya-tish-gallery-announces-closure-after-30-years/) (<https://glasstire.com/2025/10/11/anya-tish-gallery-announces-closure-after-30-years/>), Anya’s loving husband of 50 years. Despite strong sales and a dedicated staff, the gallery’s time to close has come.



(<https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Anya-Tish-Gallery-End-of-an-Era-reception.jpg>)

"End of an Era" opening reception at Anya Tish Gallery

I was lucky enough to have known Anya for over ten years. When my husband and I relocated a decade ago, we found ourselves neighbors with Anya, Mark, and their beloved dog Tuta. They turned out to be the best neighbors anyone could ask for. Anya and Mark's home is an art gallery unto itself, including superb works by photographer Lalla Essaydi (who Anya presented during FotoFest's 2014 Biennial, *View From the Inside*), and sculpture by Ann Wood of ghostly frozen roses, although the outstanding piece may be light artist Adela Andea's fabulous neon chandelier, which has become an iconic landmark of the neighborhood. Anya always spoke her mind, directly and honestly, which made her a great dinner guest. She would easily mix stories of her time in Poland, with the exciting work of an unknown artist she had recently viewed, and tales of her global travels. Anya was always an energetic and optimistic force.

Born in Kraków and raised in communist Poland, Anya was the child of Holocaust survivors. She lived through the dramatic changes within Eastern Europe in the late 20th century. In 1974, she obtained a degree in psychology from the University of Houston which she believed served her well in the gallery business. She later returned to Kraków in 1978 and obtained a

Master of Arts degree in Industrial Psychology from Jagiellonian University. As young adults in the '80s, Mark and Anya witnessed the Solidarity movement in Poland, a democratic non-violent group that overtook the communist authority. By 1981, she and Mark returned to Houston and Anya began taking courses at the Glassell School of Art, where she began to hone her true passion. Making the decision to begin work in the arts, Anya found a position at the Gerhard Wurzer Gallery where she learned the art of printmaking, working closely with several European printmakers. She eventually became director, mentored by Mr. Wurzer himself. By 1996 Anya felt ready to strike out on her own, and she opened the Anya Tish Gallery in a small house on Sunset Boulevard, exhibiting prints and Eastern European artists.

In 2005, the 4411 Montrose block opened specifically for Houston's gallerists to display what they felt the city needed to see. Anya (along with neighboring Barbara Davis) was an original occupant of the building and attended the ribbon cutting ceremony. Since then, so many have come and gone, but Anya's gallery remained for over 30 years, an anomaly in such a risky business. She retained many artists for the duration as well, due to her integrity in business and the trust she built with artists. Her devotion to the arts sustained her and the gallery even through faltering economic downturns such as the 2000s Enron scandal followed by the Great Recession, when art collectors in Houston were tightening their wallets.

One of the few experimental art spaces in Houston bold enough to combine video artists, photographers, painters, collagists, sculptors, and light artists, Anya's gallery continuously brought a "wow" factor and viewers understood that the exhibits were never going to be boring. She took many risks on unknown artists, but her natural instincts — what came to be known as "Anya's eye" — were solid.

She encountered Katja Loher's video art in a tiny booth outside Art Basel in Switzerland, and knew she had to invite her to join the gallery. Despite the early stages of video art in the '90s, when too much of it was repetitious and expected, Anya knew Loher's "videosculptures" were unique. Similarly, Anya happened upon the Dutch artist Hedwige Jacobs' studio at Sawyer Yards and felt that her work would be successful. Jacobs' documentation of her work *Woven Living Room Installation* (2015) has since been included in a major acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, as part of the acquisition from the Austin arts organization Women & Their Work.

Anya's passion for art and her sincerity toward all those she worked with were palpable. She treated the artists on her roster like family. She maintained familiar relationships with several collectors for over three decades. Her staff was composed of longtime friends, including Sharon Neyland who began working with Anya in the '90s and has been a constant presence at

the gallery, working in installation and design of exhibits, among many other duties. The gallery's current director, Dawn Ohmer, began over six years ago, and with Anya's mentorship she diligently worked her way into the director position. After Anya's death, Ohmer inked a tattoo on her arm in homage to her friend and mentor.



[_ \(https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Neva-Mikulicz.jpg\)](https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Neva-Mikulicz.jpg)

Artist Neva Mikulicz with her work "The Guardian of Forever," 2021. Photo: David Leon

Many things made Anya's gallery unique, but one of the most important was her enthusiasm for Eastern European artists long before many in the United States were looking seriously. Anya and Mark kept a home in Kraków and, with its proximity to many Western and Eastern European cities, would spend summers looking at talented artists and galleries. Several of

these “discoveries,” such as Maxime Wakultschik, Dmitri Koustov, George Grochocki, and Neva Mikulicz, have been with her since the beginning of their careers. A few of Anya’s “discoveries” began largely unknown and are now recognized globally, such as Adela Andea whose work belongs in the permanent collection of the Light Art Museum in Unna, Germany, as well as many public art spaces, and JCA, the self-taught artist from New York who — after a Box 13 studio visit — Dawn convinced Anya to take a risk on, and it worked. JCA’s first exhibit sold out.



[_ \(https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Adela-Andea.jpg\)](https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Adela-Andea.jpg)

Artist Adela Andea with her work “Chromatic Cyberweb #1 and #2,” 2025. Photo: David Leon

Always on the look for local talent as well, Anya was eager to represent the Indian-American painter [Ruhee Maknojia](https://glasstire.com/2025/03/12/women-their-work-announces-artists-selected-for-2026-2027-solo-exhibitions/) after her inclusion in the Artists on Site residency at the Asia Society. Ruhee's solo exhibition at Anya's gallery in 2023 was memorable, with crafty lighting and paint, the paintings extended beyond the frames. Similarly, Anya spotted Korean artist [Bumin Kim](https://glasstire.com/2020/11/19/the-beautiful-sound-of-bumin-kims-coalescence/)’s “thread paintings” at the Texas Contemporary Art Fair in 2019. Her delicate, light sensitive ombre works proved popular in group and solo shows at the gallery and they sold out. Kim continues to receive commissions and will work with Dawn on special projects.



[_ \(https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Bumin-Kim.jpg\)](https://glasstire.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Bumin-Kim.jpg)

Artist Bumin Kim with her work “Landscape #60 (Transition of a Day),” 2024. Photo: David Leon

The current exhibit, *End of An Era*, is an excellent gathering of many of the artists that Anya represented. It is stylishly designed by Ohmer and Neyland and showcases Anya's exceptional career in Houston. Anya's passing brings change for the 4411 block (which seems to have many lights turned off lately) as well as the larger Houston arts landscape.



As an immigrant herself, Anya felt a passion for highlighting the works of immigrant artists from widely diverse backgrounds, and this element of her curation became a guiding principle

of the gallery itself. It is especially important now — in our current age of overreaching raids and inhumane treatment of migrants — that, as the United States' most diverse city, Houston's art community continues to highlight visual narratives from our immigrant communities.

Anya's intention was to travel globally and bring international talent home to Houston to share with others. "Anya's eye" will be greatly missed.

End of An Era, Anya Tish Gallery's final exhibition, was on view through November 29, 2025, and the sale will remain open until December 31, by appointment only.

ONE RESPONSE

Chavez December 9, 2025 at 09:29 (<https://glasstire.com/2025/12/09/the-end-of-an-era-in-remembrance-of-anya-tish-gallery/#comment-1538432>) says:

Thoughtful review of the final show and touching memories of your neighbor. Happy to see you writing, Cammie 😊

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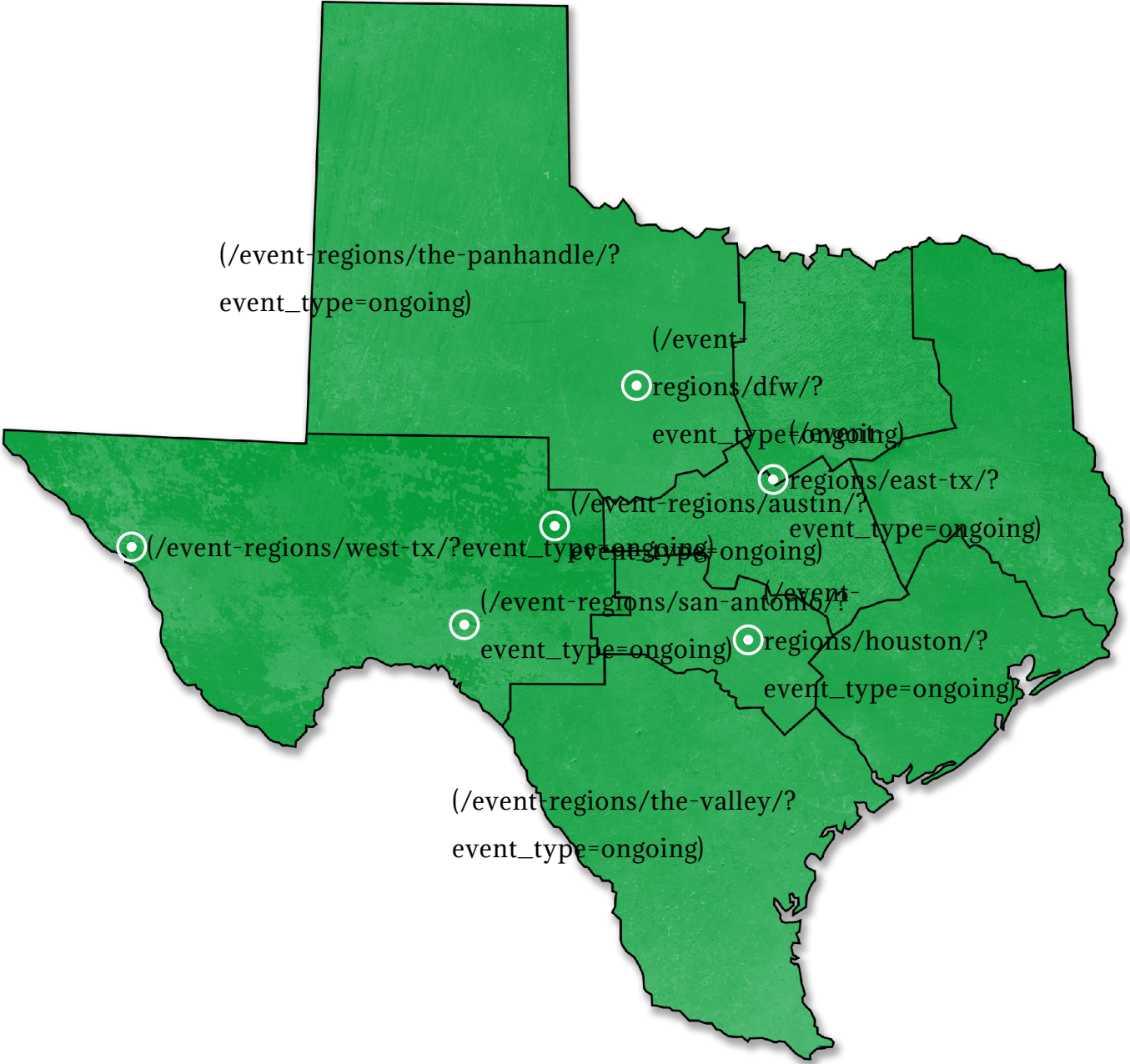
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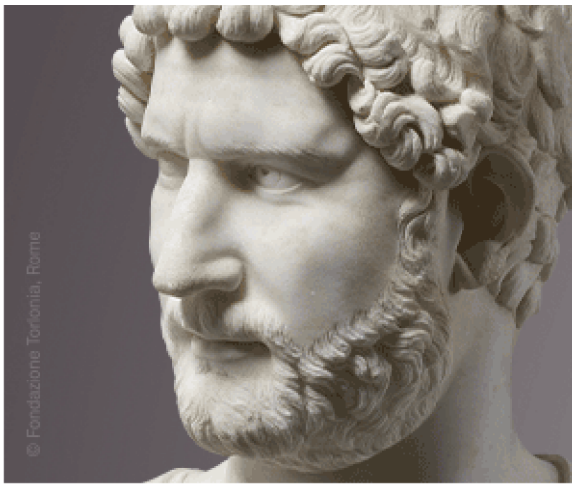
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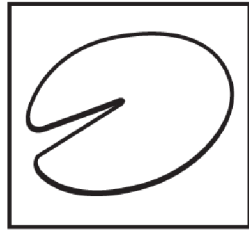
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