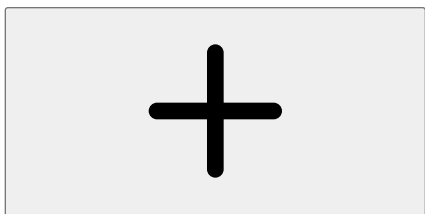
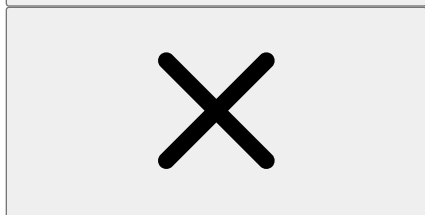
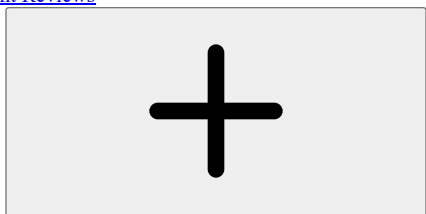


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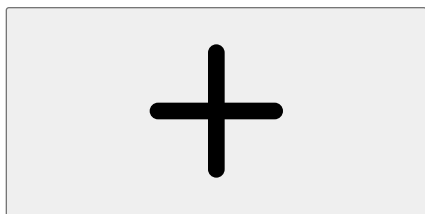
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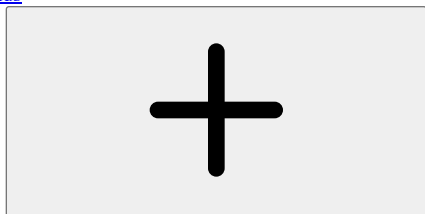
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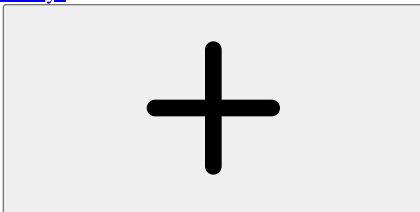
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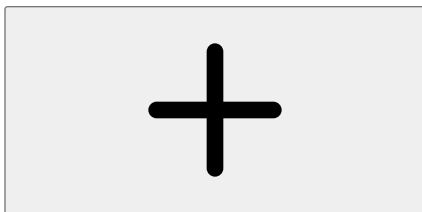
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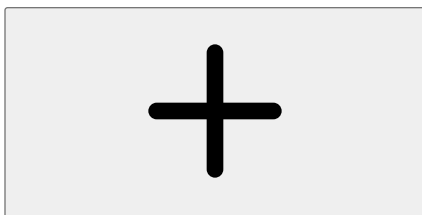
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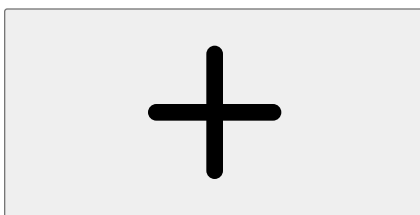
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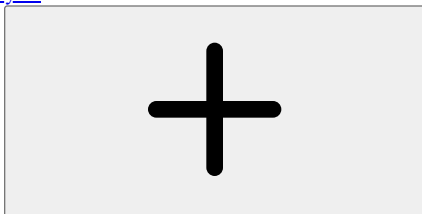
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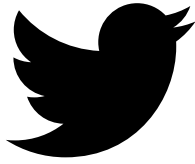
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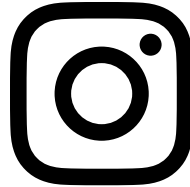
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Pożegnanie

Anya Tish Gallery: The End of an Era

A local arts writer reflects on his relationship with the late gallery owner, as well as the 30-year legacy its shuttering will leave behind.

By [Chris Becker](#) December 11, 2025



The late gallerist Anya Tish, whose namesake art space will be shutting down on New Year's Eve.

Image: [Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery](#)

It feels like a page is turning in Houston's arts scene. On December 31, 2025, after 30 years of representing an incomparable roster of [contemporary artists](#), including painters, sculptors, animators, and video artists, [Anya Tish Gallery](#) in Montrose will permanently close. Its final exhibit, *End of An Era*, closed December 6; at press time, the gallery remains open by appointment only through the end of the month.

For those of us in Houston's arts community—gallery owners, artists, collectors, and arts writers like me—the news was sad but not unexpected. Gallery founder and owner Anya Tish died at age 74 on June 12, 2024, in her hometown of Kraków, Poland. Since then, Dawn Ohmer, who started working at the gallery in early 2019 before becoming its director in 2020, says the closing is for emotional, not economic, reasons—Tish's husband of more than 50 years, Mark, looks to move past his grief.

Ad removed. [Details](#)



Anya and her husband, Mark.

Image: [Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery](#).

Located at 4411 Montrose Blvd, a gray Brutalist building that also houses veteran gallerists Barbara Davis and David Shelton, Anya Tish Gallery exhibited a carefully curated selection of local, regional, and international talent, including artists born in Colombia, [Mexico](#), and Russia. It played an essential role in defining Houston's gallery scene and supported emerging or underappreciated artists who otherwise might not have found such a welcoming space for their talents.

When I started writing about visual art in 2016, I had no idea what I was doing. Still, as a [composer](#) whose closest friends include dancers, writers, and visual artists, I believed I could bring a fresh perspective to Houston's arts scene. I was determined to offer an alternative to "art speak," the jargon-packed, often impenetrable style that dominates much arts coverage. At the time, *Houston CityBook*, a newly launched "upscale lifestyle magazine," encouraged me to write with color and sprinkle in personal details about my subjects, in the style of *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair*. Adapting to that voice, especially when writing about artists, came with a learning curve: As I read aloud one of my first profiles of a highly respected Houston painter, the editor in chief pretended to fall asleep and snore.

What my art writing was missing was "the human element"—personal details that would engage the reader, regardless of their interest in art: What does an artist's studio look like? Does it look like a tornado ripped through it, or is it unnervingly clean and organized? Do they listen to music when they paint, and if yes, what kind of music? Do they wear makeup and jewelry while working? Or a ratty T-shirt and paint-splattered jeans?

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To help me gain a more vivid sense of Houston's art scene, a fellow writer gave me a tour of a handful of Houston galleries—the historic Isabella Court in Midtown, standouts in the [Museum District](#), and 4411 Montrose. That's where I met Anya Tish.

Dealing art requires a strong, engaging personality, and Tish, an immigrant and child of Holocaust survivors, certainly had that. She was short (like me), stylishly dressed, wore fashionably flamboyant spectacles, and spoke flawless Polish-accented English. (I can still hear her wonderful voice in my head.) "Although short in stature, Tish had a determined fierceness about her," says Ohmer. "She was tough, and you had to be tough to work for her."



Anya with mentee and current Anya Tish Gallery director Dawn Ohmer.

Image: [Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery](#)

Tough? Definitely. But like her beloved black pit bull, Tuta, there was also a softness beneath that exterior. According to Ohmer, Tish's favorite things included "manners, helping others, and kind, honest people." From the very beginning of our friendship, she championed my aspirations as a writer. Tish introduced me to the talented artists who showed at her gallery, each of whom [pushed the boundaries](#) of their respective mediums and materials. The late, great HJ Bott—whose career spanned roles as an industrial investigator, a member of the San Antonio police force, and a speechwriter for Hubert Humphrey—used his mathematically based Displacement of Volume Concept system to create sculptures, paintings, and even fully functioning robots. Adela Andea, who grew up in Romania during the last years of Communism, joined the gallery in 2009. The artist, who vividly remembers creating art as a child without the benefit of electric light, went on to achieve international acclaim for her otherworldly, luminescent installations of industrial electronics, LEDs, and plexiglass.

Tish was not just providing me with subjects I could pitch to my editors; she was offering a way to learn more about art itself. "It's rare to have someone like Anya in your corner," says Shayne Murphy, an artist who presented three solo shows at the gallery. His works ranged from vibrant oil paintings to meticulous charcoal drawings depicting natural and urban landscapes, as well as saints and monsters drawn from Jewish and Christian [traditions](#).



Scene from Anya Tish Gallery's twentieth anniversary show in 2016.

Image: [Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery](#).

"For an artist, finding a gallery is like finding a wife or a partner. You need to be able to trust them, and they need to be able to trust you," he adds. It's telling that once an artist joined Tish's gallery, they stayed. Sometimes for decades. In the relatively unregulated art world, where stories abound of artists being taken advantage of by predatory dealers, she was an example of how to balance [sales with genuine care](#) for nurturing the gallery artist's creativity.

"I believe Anya was driven by a love of the arts and a desire to contribute to and support the art community," says Lillian Warren, whose paintings range from humorous portraiture of local artists to spooky, near-deserted [urban landscapes](#). "Very few gallerists get rich. They do it for the love of it." That desire to support a community is evident in Tish's 2019 interview for *ArtHouston*, where she described the gallery as "a place where people can come together to engage in a discourse initiated by the art." To her, a gallery created "a discourse that often serves as a catalyst for addressing social concerns," an essential aspect of helping create and maintain a healthy society.



Dialogues: A Convergence of Color and Form, 2024, Tatiana Escallón and Marisol Valencia at Anya Tish Gallery.

Image: [Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery](#).

Thanks to Ohmer and the assistance of Sharon Neyland, Tish's close friend and advisor, the gallery has continued to thrive as a hub for that kind of discourse for the past year. Last spring, at the opening of *Anya's Eye*, an expansive group show featuring more than two dozen of the gallery's artists, I squeezed into the gallery's tiny kitchen to sample vodka Jell-O shots that Andea had prepared for the occasion. There, artists and I chatted about travel, art, and Anya. The event felt like a family gathering; the mood both jovial and bittersweet.

Over the course of its history, Tish's gallery filled a gap, and its legacy will be shaped by its absence. In the meantime, as a seasoned arts writer, I have Anya Tish to thank for gently but firmly pushing me to think more deeply about what I see and how to better convey, with words, stories about the artists behind the art.

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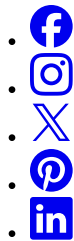
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