

TRAGEDY BREATHES

Tyler Kay, a 2011 Cinco Ranch High School graduate, returns to Katy after a tragic event and regains her creativity

Written by Anna-Catherine Rose | Photography by Alex Hamm

When Tyler Kay received the news that her high school sweetheart, Chris Saiz, had been suddenly killed in a passenger car accident her freshman year of college, everything came to an abrupt halt. The 2011 Cinco Ranch High School graduate and economics major at Blinn Junior College packed up and returned to Katy to regroup. Little did she know this pause in her journey would be the very thing that would reignite a passion and forever alter her path.

“I had to invent a new normal to function,” she describes. “For months I wanted to be alone, and it was in this solitude that I began drawing and painting again. It was a way I could speak without saying any words and the one thing I could control during a time when life seemed so unfair.”

Kay has always been able to draw and paint. As a little girl, she would paint on anything - from tennis shoes to seashells. Her grandmother nurtured her talent, but as she grew older, the need for a more practical career direction summoned - until Chris’ accident. It served as a catalyst for reevaluation. “Chris lived fearlessly, and I committed to living that way after his death,” she reflects.

Tragedy That Changed Trajectory

Kay soon changed her major to art and obtained an undergraduate degree from the University of Houston, where she is currently pursuing a master’s degree in arts leadership. She serves as the gallery director of Bisong Art Gallery in downtown Houston, oversees operations and events, teaches painting classes, and creates commissioned pieces. “Tyler’s passion, dedication, and eagerness to learn radiates from her,” Carla Bisong, owner of Bisong Gallery, shares how she knew Kay was the ideal candidate for the director position.

What also stands out about Kay is her drive. At just 23, she has supported herself with her art and other creative avenues

for nearly five years. She’s painted a variety of murals locally and beyond. One, in which she was commissioned to create through her involvement with the HUE Mural Festival, is located at St. Arnold’s Brewery and is 25 feet tall and 30 feet long. With only five days to complete it, she used a two-inch brush and worked day and night, arranging a spotlight on her dad’s truck to get her through the wee hours.

Inspired by the ordinary and extraordinary alike, Kay travels at least once a month, both domestically and abroad. She thrives on immersing herself into local landscapes and cultures. In fact, she was recently awarded a two-week summer artist residency on Skopelos Island, Greece. She plans on studying and painting the many different wildflowers that bloom on the island in order to bring peacefulness of mind to all.

A Focus on Florals

Kay’s primary motif in her artwork includes roses. She is best known for her “Take Care” painting - a larger than life rose cluster that bursts with color and dimension. “I find florals so aesthetically and effortlessly beautiful,” she says. “It’s fascinating how one stem can produce a variety of blooms and at different times. When I paint them, I have the freedom to make them whatever I choose.”

Grounded in Gratitude

While Kay is busier than ever, she’s also extremely grounded and exudes authenticity. “I know, deep in my heart, I was meant to share this gift with the world. I don’t take a single day for granted,” she says. She’s equally passionate about giving back, especially within her hometown of Katy, regularly visiting schools to speak with students about pursuing art-related careers and fundraising. When asked what she would tell an aspiring artist, she energetically exclaims, “Pursue your passion - don’t settle or waste your days. There are so many ways to make a paycheck!”

SENSATIONAL
Katy
Women

Cinco Ranch High
School graduate, Tyler
Kay, began painting
when she was a little girl

Inspiration



"I know, deep in my heart, I was meant to share this gift with the world. I don't take a single day for granted."

- Tyler Kay

It's often said, "Art is about paying attention." And if there's one thing Kay would like others to remember, it stems from just that. "Realize there is beauty in every moment. Live life to the fullest," she emphasizes. "Wisdom birthed from hardship, that can radically change one's course." KM

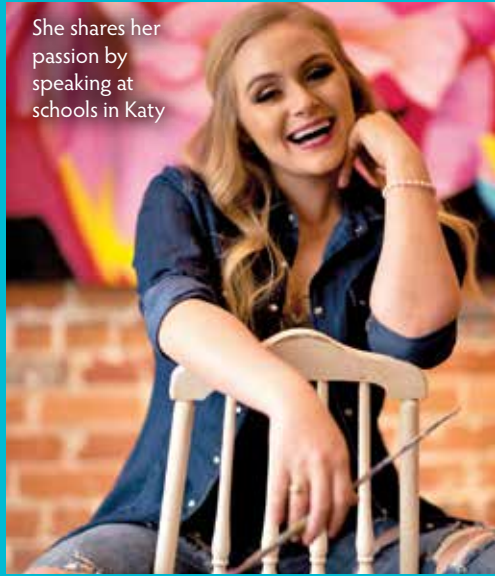
ANNA-CATHERINE ROSE lives in Katy with her husband and 5-year-old son. Meeting with Tyler Kay was a privilege and emboldened her in her own creative pursuits.

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Kay worked night and day on an over-sized mural at St. Arnold's Brewery in Houston



She shares her passion by speaking at schools in Katy



She mainly paints florals because she finds them beautiful and fascinating

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