

CASE STUDY

PUNCTUM GALLERY

CONTEMPORARY ART

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Punctum Gallery is an art gallery opening in late 2023 in Noblessneri district in Tallinn. The gallery is dedicated to contemporary art focusing on photography but embracing all art media.

Art reflects the significance of its time. The gallery comprehends contemporary photography as a reflection of our society today. Punctum chooses to show artists who deal with currently relevant themes and wishes to amplify those artistic voices which contribute to the expanding medium of photography and to the evolution of contemporary art.

NAMING THE GALLERY

Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a French literary theorist and philosopher. In 1980, shortly prior to his death, his short book *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* was published. The book investigates the nature and essence of photography, and the effects it has on the spectator. Barthes' theory of photographic meaning makes a distinction between *studium* and *punctum*, highlighting *punctum* as photography-specific.

Studium explores how historical, social or cultural elements of our identity afflict our reading of art, and our reaction to it. *Punctum* on the other hand speaks beyond our cultural, trained self, and can be interpreted as our emotional self. What pierces us a viewer, can be a small detail, or the entire work. *Punctum* conveys meaning in a photograph without invoking any recognisable symbolic system, and accounts for the importance of emotion and subjectivity in interacting with photographs.

VISUAL APPROACH

The brand's visual approach is rooted in Barthes' analysis of *punctum* – the instance in which an element (or elements) rises from the scene, shots out of it like an arrow, and pierces us. Subtle, yet distinctive typography combined with a softened monochromatic colour palette lets the artworks speak for themselves, thus letting the artistic voices be both seen and heard.

We use a custom ripple effect to create a distorted effect, as if words themselves were being pierced. In life, ripple effect is a situation in which when one thing occurs, it has a direct effect on others, who in turn affect situations and people around them. Imagine dropping a pebble into water, and watch the ripples it creates, how they move and affect one another. This occurrence can be compared to the effect art has on people. When becoming exposed to an artwork – the pebble –, we are being pierced by emotions that we in turn project onto those around us, thus creating a chain.

By combining Barthes' philosophical approach on photography with waves of emotions, we have given the brand a captivating and questioning, intelligent look, inspiring us to look deeper.

