For the art lover, the gallery is a place where aesthetic needs are to be met, a place that provides the spiritual and emotional ambience of pleasure, and ultimately, an escape from reality as an indistinguishable amalgam of trivia and sensation. If the art lover then “encounters” a work of extraordinary structural beauty in the gallery, a fruit of the artist’s distinct manual skills, it is safe to say that the art lover had a first-class experience. At first glance, this frequently occurring, superficial, though not entirely insignificant approach to art and the expectations associated with it, is fully embodied by Bojan Radojčić’s exhibition “The Hidden Place”. Everything one would need for a dose of visual and viewing pleasure is there: a classic, masterful drawing of monumental dimensions, founded in realism, an appealing installation with plants and a golden cover, finely balanced size in relation to the space. However, the beautiful illusion slowly dissipates, and the visitor is quietly contaminated, confronted with a far deeper and more serious content, containing a sophisticated-subversive image of the morally stumbled modern world, which overwhelms the visitor. It does not do so rudely and shockingly, but subtly and poetically, drawing one into the critical discourse of the phenomenon of ubiquitous surveillance.

An exciting drawing characterised by symphonic splendour, featuring the scenic ambience of an impenetrable, mystical forest with a white drapery in the foreground, under which, as if under a cover, the outlines of the body can be intuited, emits a dreamy atmosphere of melancholy and mystery. Similarly to the Garden of Eden from More’s *Amauret* or Campanella’s *City of the Sun*, bearing in mind the stereotypes of Western civilization related to utopian escapism, at first glance it offers an idyllic scene of nature as a highly aestheticized, carefree and harmless place that engulfs us in deep intimacy. Given that artist is familiar with patterns from the history of art, drawing and painting tradition, as well

as iconographic schemes of old masters, which he translates into the narrative and topical plane of his own work, the drawing acquires a timeless dimension. The complex relationship with realism, not in the sense of its anachronistic style, but as a representational strategy, which is in the service of anticipation of a certain narrative, rather than its articulation and illustration, renders the work current and engaged. Therefore, in dealing with the problem of surveillance and complete loss of privacy in a globalised society networked with hyper-information that “suffers” from virtual social-phagy,

the artist introduces elements into the Arcadian scene that serve as metaphors, mimicking them in a way, and giving them natural vitality - elements of a public, mass-transmitted spectacle. Microphones, cameras and reflectors are featured in the drawing, as magnificent as trees, with a strange organic quality, harmonised with the vegetation to such a degree that the eye of the observer does not protest at first, because one does not feel the visual and semantic split in the play. Bearing in mind the process of the artist’s work, which includes many preparatory studies for the final piece, as well as downloading images, frames from digital archives and private photographs, fitting them without visible semantic and formal seams, and then accurately transferring the conceptualised composition onto book pages that are only merged into a whole in the gallery space, one forms an impression of the structural complexity of the creative process.

A video-sound installation, resembling a sort of a three-dimensional replica of the drawing, made of decorative plants, with the space in between covered with crumpled gold foil, microphones and monitors, all placed in a large box, is set up on the gallery floor. The cables protrude from the box and, just like vines they meander, thereby creating an impression of uncontrolled, unpredictable movement. The plants are not as wild as they would be in a forest, but are rather cultivated, nurtured to enrich the space, which is why they take on a partially artificial character. The foil cover does not convey the original meaning of gold, symbolising absolute perfection and reflecting heavenly light, nor does it

point to its secondary interpretations of power and wealth; rather, in this work it turns into beautiful, cheap gilding, into pseudo, and refers to false, instant representativeness, devoid of any spiritual content. Unlike the drawing, which could pretend to be symbolically eternal, the installation sends a coded message that questions the global phenomenon of the loss of privacy in the reality of the here and now, given that events from the gallery itself are streamed through screens and microphones. The discreetly imposed and unavoidable participation in the work creates both a sense of discomfort and excitement in the observer due to the unexpected identification of oneself in the monitor, tucked among the plants, broadcasting a recording from the gallery’s video surveillance in real time. Cameras record every movement, every sound, and potentially store them permanently in digital archives. Privacy

based on the autonomy of our personality, i.e. the belief that we are the owners of our lives and that no one else can decide on our behalf when and how our privacy will become public, disperses as an illusion of an ideal image, which, in the mind of the observer, slowly begins to decompose. The panopticon, as a powerful metaphor of the system of supervision and control, is built into the consciousness of the individual and constantly modifies one’s behaviour.

The exhibition “The Hidden Place”, through cooperation between traditional and new media, the artist poses questions about the structure of the global society of morally deviant principles, which is based on the invisible and ubiquitous supervision and control of individuals by centres of power, loss of privacy and personal sovereignty. He problematizes and questions the existence of an escapist, hidden place where man is free. The illusion of freedom, similarly to a beautiful, seductive but porous and fragile image, becomes apparent.