

Philip Curnow's photographic investigation of 'safety cameras' in and around Cardiff will make the viewer start to question why we, the British, who live in a free democratic country, are compliant and accepting of the growing number of surveillance, security and "safety cameras" that seem to record and document almost every moment of our public lives – and perhaps many of our private moments as well.

With so much surveillance, we are starting to become immune to their intrusion into our lives. However, the most effective surveillance is one that makes the surveyed modify their own behaviour in the knowledge that they can not only be seen, but also identified. Speed Cameras (or 'safety cameras' as they are officially known), not only force us to modify our own behaviour by their very existence, but they can also identify anyone who breaks their arbitrary rules, allowing the imposing sanctions that can include the loss of money and could result in the individual losing their job and perhaps even their home as a result.

The artist's investigation is titled "For The Greater Good" – and asks the viewer to consider for whose benefit many of these "Safety Cameras" are actually operated. Is road safety ultimately improved by having a visible deterrent for drivers that drive dangerously fast, which could remove their money and jobs if they transgress? Would we all be safer if there were more visible reminders with displays that warn us of excessive speed? Do we all feel safer and more protected by the use of covert and hidden cameras behind road signs, hidden in bushes, lifted high up in the air where we can't see them? The artist's work does not make a judgement on the use of surveillance cameras and technology (unlike the technology's instant judgement on any offender), but rather, asks us to consider how we feel about both the use of visible surveillance technology, which makes us modify our behaviour (perhaps to a more socially acceptable behaviour). The artist also looks at the comparison of covert or hidden surveillance, which is intended to visit a level of sanction or punishment on the individual if they transgress – and provides a large monetary benefit for the organisations operating the covert surveillance.