

**JOHN CURRIN**  
**Untitled**6 May - 10 June 2000  
35 Heddon Street, London W1

Virtuosity of technique

Underpainting as opposed to the *alla prima* method, closely associated with modernism. Leads to an ideological break with modernism?

Subject matter has softened from the more contentious works of the early to mid nineties, which often garnered accusations of sexism.

These works have evince a romanticism and sophistication of technique yet Currin has not lost his deftness of perception/ powers of social observation have become more sophisticated.

'The guy, at any rate, is unlikely to attract many viewers to his side: something about the way his left arm reaches behind the girl's back, the crudeness of his idea of making his move, plus the caricatural tough guy grin on his face make him seem too overbearing, just too coarse, in fact, for the girl he is with. Her awkwardness, clear in the way she holds her glass and in the nervous hilarity of her expression, suggests that she may not have enough experience to really hold her own here. Does she elicit our sympathy, then?

Maybe so: perhaps we hope she can use her naivety as her strong card.

But questions concerning the inwardness of such a figure, as though she were a character in a novel or short story, seem beside the point given the principal fact in the painting: her physical monstrosity, her sticklike arms that go on forever, her giraffe neck, her snoutlike nose, and a mouth that virtually takes over the picture. I can't stop staring at this rubber neck and these elasticised arms – they are, frankly, mesmerising.'

Norman Bryson on 'Park City Grill', 2000