

My favourite painting Skye Gyngell

All My Loving by David Spiller



All My Loving, 2013, mixed media on canvas, 72in by 60¼in, by David Spiller (1942–2018), Heckfield Place, Hampshire



Skye Gyngell is the culinary director at Heckfield Place hotel, Hampshire, and founder of Spring Restaurant in Somerset House, London W2. She was previously head chef at Petersham Nurseries Café, which was awarded a Michelin star in 2011

‘There are so many really wonderful and fascinating paintings at Heckfield—it’s almost impossible to choose—but I think the painting that defines the hotel more than any other, for me at least, is the David Spiller in the drawing room. Guests have a really visceral response to it and it adds so much life and personality to the room, which is otherwise incredibly tranquil and calm. It has an energy about it that everyone seems drawn to, including me!’

Charlotte Mullins comments on *All My Loving*

At the heart of David Spiller’s graphic canvases are songs about love. Until his death in 2018, he spent his days in a large studio in south London using the floor as his easel, stencilling lyrics and cartoon characters onto raw canvas, adding graffiti and pops of colour.

Spiller grew up in Kent and studied at Sidcup Art School and Beckenham College of Art. He was awarded a place at the Slade School of Art when he was 20 and was taught by Frank Auerbach and William Coldstream. He then spent the next two decades teaching, until a chance trip to the Cologne Art Fair in 1985 fired him back up as an artist. He moved to New York for a year, then to Germany,

living in Berlin and exhibiting widely. His breezy pop palette and one-liner lyrics made his paintings popular, as did the cartoon icons he stencilled on: Felix the Cat, Minnie Mouse, Popeye and Olive, Donald Duck.

Each painting is built up of layers, from the blocks and circles of flat colour to the lettering. Interspersed are areas of graffiti and gestural abstraction. It’s as if we get everything that is occupying his mind at that moment, from riffs on recent art history to his favourite songs and television shows. In this painting, Miller referenced The Beatles’s 1963 song *All My Loving*, as well as a line from the chorus of Rod Stewart’s *Young Turks*: ‘Young hearts be free tonight/Time is on your side.’