



Florence Broadhurst

Helen O'Neill

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Re-released with a stunning new cover, Florence Broadhurst is back. Using Broadhurst's iconic Turnabouts pattern, O'Neill's award-winning book has been revamped with another an eye-catching design. Florence Broadhurst was born in 1899 to a farming family in Mount Perry, the isolated heart of rural Queensland. At the age of 15, she wrote an article for her small country school that reads like a mission statement. "I am resolved to do great things", she said. "My name may not be spoken by people of the future, my fame may not be lauded, but...I shall do great things." By 19, she was singing her way around Australia, her remarkable contralto voice having apparently won her the chance to perform with Nellie Melba and Robert Helpmann. By 25 she had toured across Asia to rave reviews under the name Booby Broadhurst, the star turn in The Globe Trotters, a saucy vaudeville troop that included transvestites, singers, dancers and actors. After decades as a successful courtier to young English ladies both in Shanghai and London, she returned to Australia at age 50, claiming to be an aristocratic English woman visiting the colonies to recuperate from the ravages of WW II. She spent the ensuing years painting the landscape before moving on to portraits of the rich and famous. By 58 she was an adarling of the high-end social set, promoting herself as a tireless fundraiser for good causes while also running an inter-state trucking business. At 63 she declared Australia was afraid of colour and announced a new venture - a wallpaper business. Broadhurst created over 800 hugely popular designs that defined the swinging 60s. Her designs were extremely sought after throughout the world, with long waiting lists for her work. On 16 October, 1977, at the age of 78, Broadhurst was found murdered in her Paddington wallpaper showroom. Her fingers were broken, her head stuffed into her lavatory bowl. Jewellery worth tens of thousands of dollars was missing. Her murder remains unsolved.

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