



**SUPERSIZE ME:** Left, Broadhurst's Steps pattern used by decorator Greg Natale; above, from left, Solar, part of the Concepts line; Egrets, on silver Mylar paper; the Cockatoos pattern; right, Broadhurst in 1926

Mary Frances Benko, vice president of textiles at John Rosselli, the New York distributor of the line.

The Broadhurst renaissance is being driven by the Sydney-based firm Signature Prints. When owner David Lennie unearthed the original silk screens in 1989, they were in utter disarray. Of the 530 designs he cataloged, only 10% have been released. Next up is a collection emblazoned with enormous daisies, gardenias and carnations and a range of luxe Jacquard and upholstery fabrics.

Broadhurst was as outrageous as her designs. She sallied forth in Titian hair, orange false eyelashes, multicolored dresses and Plexiglas rings. Flamboyant charmer, avid dissembler and wily social climber—Broadhurst was all these things and more; the peculiar details of her life cry out for a Cate Blanchett movie. Until then we have *Unfolding Florence: The Many Lives of Florence Broadhurst*, a documentary that premiered at Sundance last year.

This month comes *Florence Broadhurst: Her Secret and Extraordinary Lives*, a biography by Helen O'Neill that unravels the "Technicolor tapestry Broadhurst wove around herself." From inauspicious beginnings as the daughter of a cattle farmer, Broadhurst remade herself as a vaudeville performer and later, in 1930s London, as a couturier named Madame Pellier.

Broadhurst didn't launch her wallpaper business until she was almost 60, but her designs took off like wildfire. "Nobody did what she did in the '60s," says Benko. "Warhol did silk screening but not for wallpaper. Broadhurst had the courage to do it first."

Broadhurst's wild ride came to a shocking conclusion in 1977 when the designer was murdered in her Sydney atelier. Her assailant has never been discovered, and her life ended in mystery. But then enigma and abrupt change were her signatures. ■

club in London this year. Colorist Christophe Robin's dazzling new beauty emporium in Paris has Broadhurst patterns, as does the retooled Australian consulate in Dubai. Meanwhile, a new luxury resort in Fiji is being decked out entirely in her oeuvre.

"It's like wall art," says interior designer Amanda Masters, who selected a sumptuous floral for a room commissioned by Mulberry for L.A.'s Soho House. (The British leather-goods company also added the paper to the window display of its Melrose Place store.) One of the designer's hallmarks was outsize motifs. "She took 18th century designs and blew them up," says

## Off the Wall

As the rage for modish wallpaper rolls on, the woman who started it all, Florence Broadhurst, is having an overdue revival

By George Epaminondas

**LUSH BAMBOO PLANTS**, glittering peacocks, leaping kangaroos and quizzical cockatoos inhabit the wild wallpaper universe of Florence Broadhurst. Bursting onto the Australian design scene in the 1960s, Broadhurst was a trailblazer who worked exclusively with hand-printed paper and a color evangelist who favored kaleidoscopic couplings like turquoise and gold or orange and silver. In other words, not your grandmother's wallpaper. Now, it seems, Broadhurst's designs are on a roll—again.

Already in a slew of swank nightclubs from Sydney to Reykjavik, Broadhurst's confections are being used in the face-lift of Madame Jo Jo's