Tools of the Trade

Torch

Name: Mim Armour
Job: Museum registrar
Where: TarraWarra Museum of Art
Why is it important?

All major museums have a registrar. The last point before the public is allowed to see an artwork involves me, with a torch, checking the work is in the same condition as when it left the lender or institution. Some registrars use a head torch but I find a hand-held one easier: I get up quite close and use my torch to look at it in sections, and side on. I might find very minor cracking, or foreign matter like dust attached. When I’m satisfied, I step back and let the public enjoy it. A touring exhibition like the Archibald (June 9-July 8) is easier for me. When we get those works the Art Gallery of NSW will have them specially packed and transported to me in a climate-controlled truck.

What do your colleagues think?
I try to be as efficient as possible, but my colleagues know I have to step back and leave me to the task. They’re keen to hang the artwork, and I’m telling them to wait a few more minutes.

Unusual moment?
I won’t forget a Brett Whiteley work with a lot of three-dimensional items on it, including a taxidermied lorikeet on a branch. I had to get up quite close to this little parakeet to see what was happening with it.

How much does it cost?
I use a Maglite (anywhere from $15 to $100 plus). But the brand isn’t important, it just needs to be a good torch with a clean light.

Sue White