

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Wooden sculptor

Name Zoe Walton.

Job Studios manager.

Where Madame Tussauds Sydney.

Why is it important? We have more than 80 figures at Madame Tussauds Sydney. Each takes about 800 hours to make, and 60 artists work on one figure. I use the sculpting tool every day to move and mould the wax, or mend minor abrasions to the surface of the figure. It is a wooden stick about the size of a pen, and it comes in slightly different shapes and both hard and soft wood. I couldn't work without it. However, the process of making the figures starts way before this. First, we meet the celebrity and take photos. Once the mould is made, we add the eyes, teeth and hair, before dressing the figure in clothes the celebrity has often donated.

What do your colleagues think?

Every member of my team has one or two of these tools: a standard one plus a smaller tool for doing detailed work. We all have our favourites; sometimes colleagues use sandpaper to file it to the shape they like. We come in about 7am and work on every figure before the attraction opens.

Unusual moment? When I worked for Madame Tussauds in London, we had a visit from a Bollywood star who came in to see his own wax figure.

How much does the tool cost?

About \$18, but they are priceless to us.

SUE WHITE



Crowning glory ... Zoe Walton does a royal touch-up. Photo: Marco Del Grande