

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 they 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

