

# MELEM TIAOU



## • CRAFT/PROFESSION

Melem TIAOU, a native of Ouvéa, creates carvings made from New Caledonian woods such as gaiac, niaouli, eucalyptus and sandalwood. The artworks he fashions all reflect his own distinctive touch.

He first cuts and cleans the pieces of wood (stripping off the bark), then leaves them to dry for several days.

He begins carving using a grinder and then variously sized chisels to achieve greater precision and enhanced finishes.

Finally, Melem begins work on the finishing touches, sanding the carving by hand for several hours and even up to several days. His carvings are always meticulously and beautifully finished.

Melem creates many different designs: garden posts, rooftop totems (featuring fishermen, the lagoon, etc.), traditional door posts and even trophies.



## • BACKGROUND

Melem's parents, both sculptors in wood, taught him carving skills and techniques when he was very young and he now teaches other people, leading wood carving workshops for adults and kids eager to learn the secrets of a traditional art form under the guidance of a professional craftsman.

## • INSPIRATION AND ART/DESIGNS

Wood is a way of life in Melem's family; he grew up watching his Corsican mother and Ouvean father carving wood, and chisels were childhood playthings.

He soon decided to become a sculptor in wood himself and now shares his art and inspiration with others who love working in wood.