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Title: From Selfie to African Zeitgeist – an inverted ZPD journey

This research project is set in the realm of tertiary education in the Visual Arts and specifically Sculpture. It explores selected processes set in place in developing, implementing and reflecting on a Sculpture project, in order to move students from their lived experiences to making skilful, relevant and meaningful three-dimensional artefacts. The purpose of this paper is to present the narrative that emerged in the project “From Selfie to Mask: Proportion Distortion Abstraction.” The aim of this research project is to represent how learners move from their own physical world, to connect to the African Zeitgeist through the *techne* of making.

In order to do that, a variation of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) model and how it plays out on both the *techne* level and on the insight level was used, as well as aspects of Gadamer’s theories on hermeneutic horizons. The ZPD model starts with what the learner can do unaided within a safe space (in this case the taking of ‘selfies’). A challenge is set with manageable steps (assimilation), which employ a set of known outcomes. Ideally, the ZPD model provides just enough guidance so that students learn to complete the tasks independently (accommodation) in an environment that enables students to do progressively harder tasks than would otherwise be possible (revolution). According to Gadamer, the learner’s hermeneutic horizon’s shift from what they know (“Erlebnis”) to having an experience or experience (“Erfahrung”), so that subjectivity is overcome and drawn into a meaningful “Event” (“Geschehen”). It was hypothesised that, with the selection of the ‘ZPD effective *techne* driven planning’ the students would progressively ‘rediscover’ their African roots – a matter of cognitive insight through experience.

As they wrestle through the *techne* of moving from the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional, as found in the domain of sculpture (and, in this reported project, mask making) with all its complexities, they creatively discover aspects of their roots. This can be seen as a widening or extending of Gadamer's hermeneutic horizon. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to present the narrative of this journey.