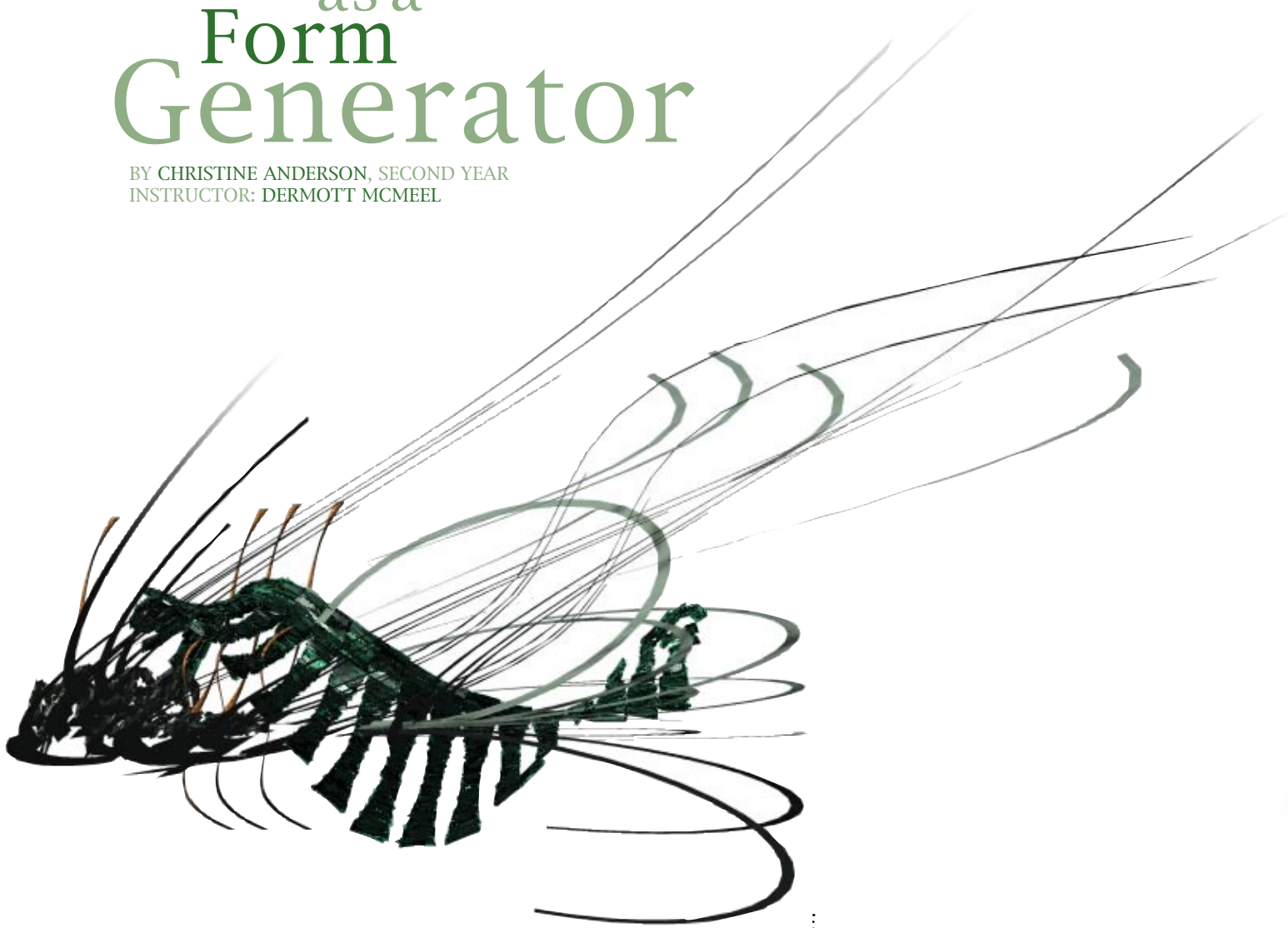


# Modelling as a Tool Form Generator

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The programme under which this project was realised is presented in the second year of the Architectural Course at the University of Edinburgh. The project is seen as an opportunity to explore modelling software as more than an investigation or representation tool within the creative design context. Its intent is to use the modelling tool as a form generator; the modelling software and what it produces become part of the design “conversation”.

## The Programme

The programme was comprised of two parts: first the creation of an environment (in this case it was stipulated as a particular building within Edinburgh) and second, the creation of a “wing” with which to navigate this environment.

### The Stimulus

To explore technology one should be aware of its trappings. The story of Icarus and Daedalus was used as a stimulus for the project and as a valuable lesson when embarking on technological exploration. Freedom, which is afforded by a technology, can be empowering but abuse of such technology can result in punishment of sorts.

In the same way that Icarus and Daedalus created their wing from the materials at hand, so too would we create our “wing” (the second part of the programme) from the environment created during the first part (a building within Edinburgh). How each individual interpreted “wing” was left to creative expression by the individual and they are encouraged to explore conceptual or artistic notion if they so wish.

### The Objectives

The intention was to break away from the notion (particularly prevalent within popular architectural practice) that modelling software is merely for representation. Rather than fighting with software—forcing it to represent what is in a designers mind’s-eye—we encouraged the designers to work with the software and its tools and let that, in part, inform their thinking.

### The Solution “Dancers”

The concept behind the design of the wing was taken from looking at the wings of a theatre, where the performers would wait to go on to the stage. The inspiration for the form of the wing came from the impressionist painting by Edgar Degas, “Dancers in the Wings”.

The more dense part of the wing is the area where the dancers gather “in the wings”. The wing form follows the movements of the four dancers in the painting, the green ribbons stretch from the side of the wing as the dancers leap and pirouette across the stage. The wing was modelled to be delicate and graceful, mirroring not only the smooth satin material of the dancer’s costumes but also the impressionist brushstrokes of Degas.

The materials used for this wing are very light and help the wing to make its flight around old college. However this means that the wing is very delicate and must be careful where it lands. It could easily be torn and damaged. Unlike the wings Daedalus designed, this dancing wing can only enjoy brief moments of flight before touching down onto the ground, as a dancer leaping into the air is brought back down by gravity. Its flight around the courtyard is smooth as it is protected by the courtyard and is therefore unaffected by the wind.



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