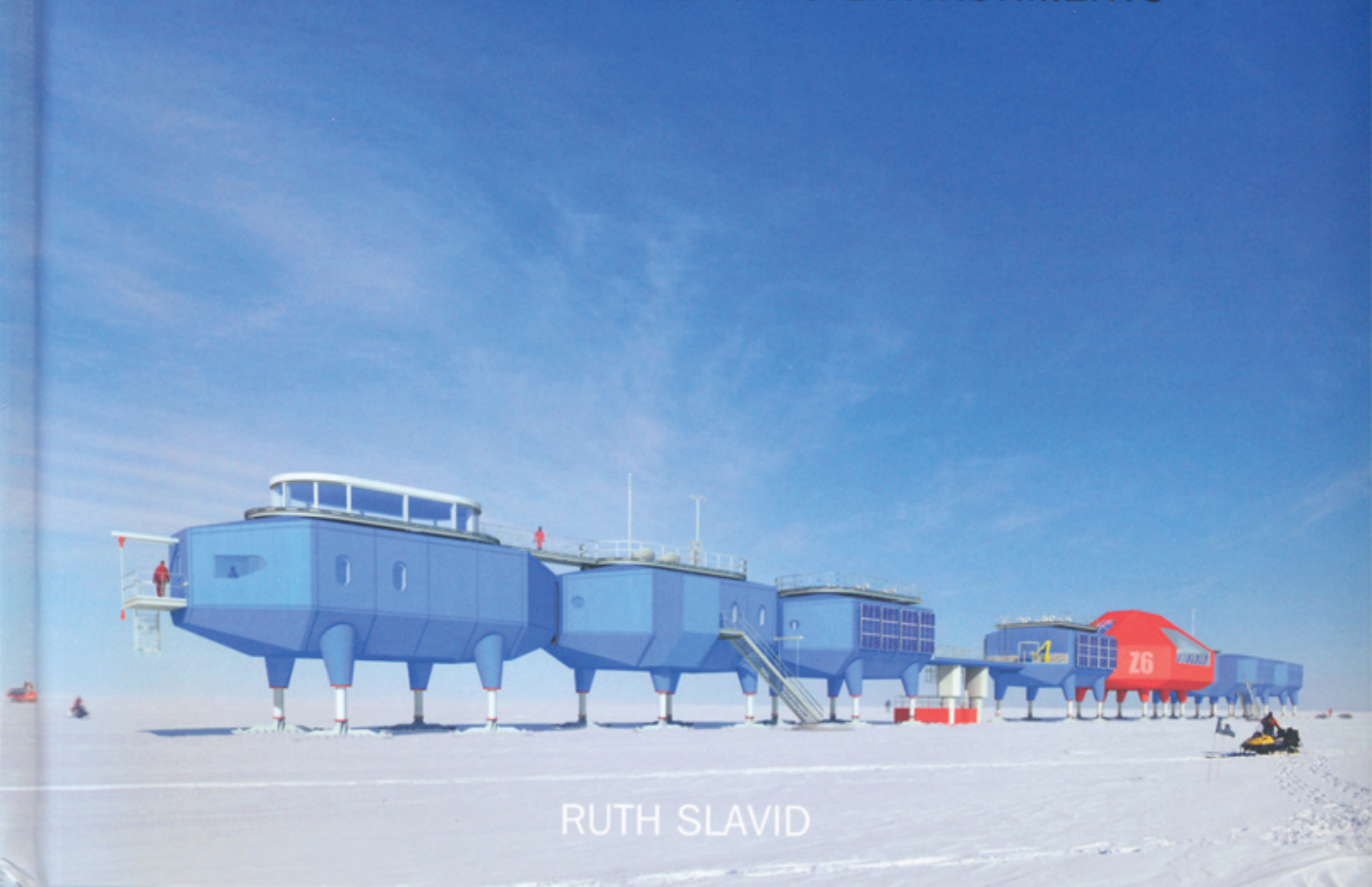


# EXTREME ARCHITECTURE

BUILDING FOR CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS



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## FLOATING CRUISE TERMINAL



Height above sea level  
0m/0ft

Average annual rainfall  
130mm/5in

Average high and low temperatures  
35°C/95°F – 19°C/66°F



If you have ever been in a small Mediterranean town when a cruise ship arrives, you will understand the logistical barriers to giving passengers the quality of experience they crave. Vast numbers of people pour ashore, swamping a tiny town, and there are long queues for boats to take them back to the mother ship. The alternative is that the ship moors in the docks, often not the most salubrious place. In a city such as Marseilles in the south of France, for example, the immediate environs are likely to appeal only to those with a real love of 'grit' and 'authenticity' – scarcely the stereotypical cruise passenger.

These problems are compounded by the fact that cruise ships are getting bigger. Launched in the spring of 2008, P & O's *Ventura* has a capacity of 3,600 passengers. Even larger and, briefly at least, the biggest in the world, is Royal Caribbean's *Independence of the Seas*, launched at much the same time. Able to carry 4,375 passengers and 1,365 crew, it is 339 metres (1,112 feet) long and 38.6 metres (127 feet) wide. If you can't imagine those figures, go to Venice where you can see the historic buildings and bridges dwarfed by giant cruise ships such as the 3,780-guest *Costa Serena*.

A lot of high-end mass-market tourism has been turned into an increasingly manufactured experience, so it seems appropriate that Dutch-based architectural practice Waterstudio.NL has come up with an idea for a floating cruise terminal – an entirely artificial experience. And the proposed location for that terminal will be the most 'manufactured' of all cities – Dubai.

The design for the terminal is triangular, enabling three of the world's largest cruise ships to moor alongside it. One of the corners is lifted, allowing access to an inner harbour, to be used by smaller ships or water taxis. And in the body of the triangle there will be 165,000 square metres (1,776,045 square feet) of facilities – retail, conference space, cinema, hotels, etc. So passengers on cruise ships will be able to disembark, shop to their hearts' content or use some of the other facilities. If they want to travel ashore, the floating terminal will make the whole process of transfer painless.

Waterstudio is an ingenious practice, which has dedicated itself to the development of projects in the water. If this terminal is successful, it could be replicated elsewhere in the world. And then one could imagine a new generation of cruises, traveling from floating terminal to floating terminal, buying souvenirs and sampling 'local' cuisine and entertainment – and never having to interact with the real world at all. Genius.

**Opposite** A giant cruise ship moored at the terminal. The view here is from the inner edge, where small boats can moor, looking across the body of the terminal which houses shops and hotels.

**Above left** One giant cruise ship can moor on each of the three sides of the terminal.

**Above** One end of the terminal tips up like the maw of a giant whale, to allow smaller boats to enter the inner harbour.