

# Design Studio – Master’s Program

## A Training Hotel on Splantzia Square in Chania

### SSE 2018

#### EP BIB 22423

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## Studio Description

With its early settlements dating back to antiquity around 3000 B.C. and having been influenced by the Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman civilizations throughout its history, today the old town of Chania is characterized both visually and economically mostly by the presence of tourism - with all its positive and negative effects. Together with agriculture tourism represents the most important industry in Crete, bringing in a great deal of funds to the public budget, which are desperately needed for the maintenance of the area’s cultural heritage. However, what is all this inflow of money really worth if as a consequence the city ends up losing its authenticity and its culture stops being a part of the local life and becomes instead just the scenery of a museum? (A phenomenon by the way that has been taking place increasingly throughout Europe in the last decades). The emergence of the tourism industry in the 1970’s in Crete created the by-product of an atmosphere of gold digging, leaving little room for sustainable growth. In addition to problems concerning the infrastructure, this development ended up leading to a bad reputation of hotels in Chania in general and eventually to the stagnation and even decline of the number of visitors.

This studio proposes the design of a training hotel on Splantzia Square with the city of Chania as its fictional client. The main goal is to investigate the structural as well as programmatic implications of implementing a hotel into a complex site such as the Splantzia Square, characterized by small parcels and unstructured growth. How can the spatial/programmatic requirements of the hotel typology create opportunities for the city? What scale is appropriate for a hotel building in the area or how present should the building be? And what parts of the program can be used as business and cultural opportunities or points of mediation between the public and private realms? The concept of a training hotel plays a crucial role here. This shouldn’t be yet another hotel that simply exists within the city but instead one that offers visitors and locals alike a special gift, by functioning as a venue for culture able to contribute positively to the Chania community.

The following are important issues to be considered:

- How can the design proposal make the best use of the small-scale character of the site or even profit from it?
- Which of the existing buildings could potentially be torn down and why?
- How can the cultural aspects of this project be reconciled with the daily routine of a hotel?
- How can the room requirements of the hotel also serve a public use?
- How can the concept of “training” or “education” take effect within the individual areas of the hotel?