

Richard ENGLAND

A MODERN VERNACULAR IN MALTA

Church of St. Joseph, Manikata, 1972 -74

The Neolithic Temples of Malta are the archetypal sacred spaces of the island, mysterious remnants of a lost culture, together with the island's *girnias* (dry-stone walled huts) their profane equivalent form the basic inspirations for this hilltop church. The building rises out of the rough stone landscape as if it were an outcrop of the earth itself. The influence of the curving feminine spaces of the Temples is clearly seen in the plan layout, while the church structure itself recalls the dry-stone walled *girnias*. Built by the peasants and farmers of the small village, the building presaged many of the changes brought about by the second Vatican Council. The simple structure with its open roundedness evokes the whole history and development of Malta's traditional buildings - an interpretation which may be termed a modern vernacular appropriate to both its time and place.

