



CRITIC'S PICK

When 'New Art' Made New York the Culture Capital

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"New York 1962-1964," opening Friday at the Jewish Museum in Manhattan, from left: Roy Lichtenstein's "Thinking of Him," 1963; Marjorie Strider's "Girl with Radish," 1963; Rosalyn Drexler's "Self-Portrait," 1964. Rosalyn Drexler/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Lila Barth for The New York Times

By Holland Cotter

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When I was a kid in the early 1960s, my Eisenhower-Republican physician-father always had the latest copies of his favored subscription publications on his home office desk: Time, Life, the Journal of the American Medical Association, and Mad magazine.

To me, Time and Life pegged him an engaged citizen; JAMA, as a conscientious professional. But Mad? With its Alfred E. Neuman mascot and anarchic, sacred cow-skewering humor? It signaled some whole other kind of reader, one with a taste for cultural weirdness akin to the one I was developing.

That taste ran through the early '60s, a manic era and a hinge moment between the Cold War and Vietnam, Civil Rights and Black Power, repression and liberation; beatnik and hippie; Ab-Ex and Pop. It's the era documented in the smart, split-level show called "New York: 1962-1964" at the Jewish Museum, an institution that, we learn, played a significant role in the cultural shifts.

