Exhibit Showcases Iconic Photos Of Civil Rights Movement

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Some of the most memorable pictures of Martin Luther King, Jr. were taken by a photographer who found himself also drawn to the civil rights movement. NY1's Cheryl Wills filed the following report on photographer Bob Adelman.

You may not recognize his face, but there's a strong chance you may recognize his work. Photographer Bob Adelman captured some of the most iconic moments of the civil rights movement during the 1960s. He says he took many of the photos with tears in his eyes.

"What we did in the press – I was in the movement and in the press – was to expose this shameful business to the country and it was unacceptable. The country didn't want it and got rid of it," says Adelman.

Adelman's work is now on display at the Westwood Gallery in Lower Manhattan. To him, his career has come full circle. Born in New York City, Adelman says he was drawn to Dr. King as he learned more about segregation and Jim Crow in the south.

"Those signs that say 'black and white,' they say, 'we who are white are in charge, and we're important and you who are black, just go somewhere else,' they're diminishing to our fellow Americans and it was the most un-American thing I ever saw," said Adelman.

A photo of King taken during the famous March on Washington in 1963 was one of Adelman's most famous photographs, captures King's gestures as he addresses the crowd. Adelman was one of the only photographers on the steps on the Lincoln Memorial. "I got to be near him at the moment he was ending his speech and saying, 'free at last,' and the speech was so powerful and the crowd was so enthused and there was Lincoln and I thought his truth is marching on," said Adelman.

At the Westwood Gallery, curators say Adelman's work is inspiring and educating a new generation. "He took these very important photographs that now are part of our history and part of an archive," says Westwood Gallery co-owner Margarite Almeida.

"I felt a calling," says Adelman. "I knew I was risking my life, but I felt it was worth it."

– Cheryl Wills