

Students created this painting of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. — and others of Malcolm X and Barack Obama — over the course of their year-long study of the African-American journey.

ARTISTRY IN BLACK

Year-long civil rights program ends in exhibit of social commentary



BY TANYANIK SAMUELS

FOR 70 students at the International Leadership Charter School in Marble Hill, a year's worth of study culminated in one special night.

Last week, the 10th-graders showcased artwork that explored issues of social justice and civil rights for their peers, parents and community members.

The event was the product of a year-long study designed to teach students about social justice and civil rights issues — including the slave trade, segregation and the 1960s Civil Rights movement.

Staffers encouraged students to explore the issues from different angles.

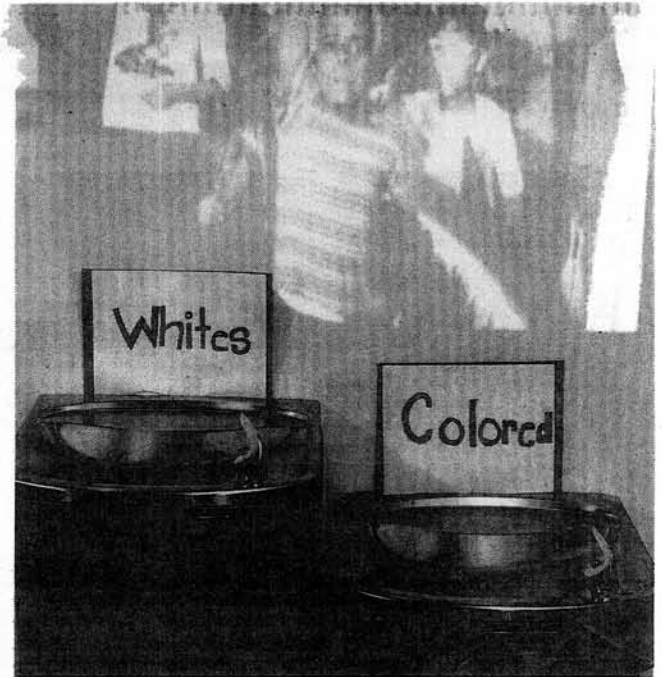
"We're consistently looking for new ways to develop their critical thinking," said Elaine Ruiz Lopez, the school's founder and principal. "Not only has this taught them to view these issues through different lenses, but it has also demonstrated to our students that they can excel at a form of artistic expression."

Exhibits included an artful recreation of a slave ship, paintings of slaves in chains, a collage of President Obama and an interactive installation of two drinking fountains — one for "whites" and one for "coloreds."

The students were taught by artist Daren Chambers, who serves as the school's artist-in-residence and art teacher. Chambers is known for his portraits of jazz musicians in concert.

tsamuels@nydailynews.com

Photos by Steven Sunshine



Exhibits at the student show included this display of separate drinking fountains for "whites" and "coloreds" — meant to represent a fact of life in the segregated South — and a painting of shackled slaves (l.), invoking the slave trade.



The Man
Our collages reflect
States was in action
between Black and
what it is today. The
is those that people
death of a lot of poor
people that represent
Orange represents the
being limited by the
and might be the
was while the
an impor
and go
ing tree
of an
a



Daren Chambers (c.), artist-in-residence at the International Leadership Charter School in Marble Hill, is surrounded by students Natasha Encarnacion (l. to r.), Felix Hernandez, Melany Castilla, Jillian Pons and Danielle Aponte. The students were joined by 65 other 10th-graders at the school in showing an exhibit of their artwork, produced during a year-long course on social justice and civil rights issues.