

My presentation is a look into the different representations of women of color in hip hop films. Since the rise of hip hop consumer culture in the 1980s women of color have played important roles as innovators and agents of change in hip hop music. Despite this, their portrayal on-screen is limited in terms of character depth and they are often divided into cliché stereotypes of what urban or black femininity is. They're reduced to b-storyline love interest for their male counterparts, who by coupling with them secures their own heteronormative status. One noticeable shift between early hip hop films and the hip hop influenced films of today is the placement of the importance of race. In early films hip hop and hip hop culture were inextricably tied to issues surrounding race (class, housing, segregation, etc.) while today in the guise of our culture's efforts towards a "post-racial" perspective, blackness and issues specifically relating to the black experience have been hidden. The two films I'll be discussing are Michael Schultz's 1985 *Krush Groove*, starring Sheila E and many of Def Jam Recording's early artists and Charles Stone III's 2013 VH1 biopic *CrazySexyCool: The TLC Story*. While over the course of nearly 30 years women taken center stage in this genre, race has taken a back seat becoming an invisible non-factor for today's representation of one of the most famous female hip hop groups of all time.