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MUSIC The 40 Biggest Hip-Hop Moments in Pop Culture History 28. PBS Airl Style Wars

## The 40 Biggest Hip-Hop Moments in Pop Culture History

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BY FOSTER KAMER | 26 MARCH 2013 | 3:15 PM | PERMALINK



### 28. PBS Airl Style Wars

Date: Fall 1983

**The Moment:** In 1983, as hip-hop culture continued its ascent into the mainstream culture, piquing the curiosity of the public, PBS aired a then-little known documentary about graffiti, breakdancing, and hip-hop culture titled *Style Wars*.

**The Impact:** The film—one of the first real looks into hip-hop as it was happening in New York City—wasn't a smash ratings hit or a definitive moment for PBS, or even hip-hop. Its due credit would come with its legacy. In the short term, however, it did make the Rock Steady Crew, and artists like Dondi, Seen, Kase 2 and more into household names, at least for the households who saw it.

**The Upshot:** The movie lives in infamy as one of the most critically acclaimed films, not just about graffiti culture and its place in hip-hop, but an art form still very much on the rise, the likes of which very little else exists. It's one of the great documentaries of the '80s. It would be the first line in co-director [Tony Silver's](#) obituary, and in the obituaries of several of its "stars." In 2011, an effort to restore some of the old footage that wasn't used in the film started as a grassroots campaign by co-director Henry Chalfant, and eventually met its goal [via crowdfunding site Kickstarter](#).

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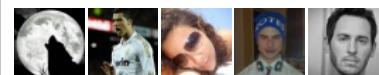
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