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Photos: Movie experience pop-up premieres in Houston

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Movietopia has premiered.

The newest pop-up concept in the Marq'E Entertainment Center is a collaboration between San Francisco-based Candytopia and Orlando, Florida-based restaurant and entertainment group Planet Hollywood. Movietopia features a variety of props, costumes and Instagram-worthy set recreations from hit films such as "Indiana Jones," "Titanic," "The Terminator," "Forrest Gump" and more. It debuted Nov. 2 and runs through Jan. 26.



LAURA GILLESPIE/HBJ

Click through the slideshow above to see photos of just some of the props, costumes and interactive areas featured at Movietopia.

Movietopia is in a 20,000-square-foot space that housed the Candytopia pop-up from June 14 to Sept. 29. That concept, an immersive and interactive candy exhibit, held limited-run engagements in a handful of cities before making its way to the Bayou City. But Houston is the first stop for Movietopia.

Part of what made the Marq'E such a good spot for the concepts, Candytopia Chief Marketing Officer Nikki Emmans said, is that guests can enjoy an entire evening in the nearly 330,000-square-foot development thanks to the theaters, dining options and more. Besides, she added, her team grew to love the area and people.

Movietopia is the latest concept to tap into the growing trend of retail and entertainment tenants offering more immersive experiences.

"People (don't) want to (just) be entertained anymore. It's not about just going to a movie, sitting there, eating your popcorn, and going home and discussing that movie," Matt Parsons, senior vice president of retail at JLL, told the Houston Business Journal in April. "It's about individual and/or group participation, having a good time, and while having a good time, sharing that you're having a good time on the social media outlets."

Social media is the new marketing for these companies, Parsons said. The retail industry is transitioning into what is most Instagrammable or what can provide a better experience, rather than what can be taken off a shelf.

Movietopia allows guests to jump in a shrimping boat reminiscent of "Forrest Gump," slide down a sunken Titanic, pose in a Flintstones car and look at props from "Star Wars," "Blade," "Superman," "Beetlejuice" and many more. The movie memorabilia comes from Planet Hollywood's collection.

Candytopia has two other concepts — Toys R Us Adventure and Hooptopia, with the Golden State Warriors out of San Francisco — but Emmans was tight-lipped on when, if ever, those concepts would come to Houston.

Movietopia, at 7620 Katy Freeway near the northwest corner of the interchange between Interstate 10 and the 610 Loop, hired a staff of about 100.

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