Amazon Creates a 19th-Century Traveling Carnival to Promote The Aeronauts

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Amazon Prime Video has recently turned to experiential marketing to promote its original series, with activations including a pop-up museum in New York for Modern Love and an apocalypse-themed space for Good Omens at SXSW. To promote its latest original film, the streaming service has created a traveling carnival straight out of the 19th century complete with hot air balloon rides.

The Aeronauts' Incredible Journey is a cross-country fan experience set in 1862 to promote The Aeronauts, a semi-biographical drama about the ballooning journey of real weather scientist James Glaisher (Eddie Redmayne) and fictional pilot Amelia Wren (Felicity Jones).

The events are free and open to the public, with balloon rides available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
Jeff Lovin
Traveling to six cities, The Aeronauts’ Incredible Journey is anchored by a real hot air balloon dubbed The Mammoth, a replica of the aircraft depicted in the film that takes guests on their own (not so high) flying journey. There are more 19th century-inspired activities and attractions such as hypnosis shows and a caricature artist, plus exhibits featuring costumes and props from the film.

The carnival is populated with period performers such as stilt walkers and jugglers, plus a fortune teller, a phonograph DJ booth and a stereoscopic photo op where guests can pose in front of a green screen as if they’re in a hot air balloon.

The kickoff event at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena had a “Fly-In Theatre” with the film projected on a second hot air balloon.
Jeff Lovin
The experience opened in Los Angeles last weekend and traveled to San Francisco on Tuesday. The traveling carnival is free with RSVP, and will move on to Phoenix (Nov. 30), Atlanta (Dec. 10), Orlando (Dec. 13), Austin (Dec. 17), then back to L.A. (Dec. 20-22), this time at The Grove (and without balloon rides).

Amazon Prime Video partnered with creative agency AKQA to produce The Aeronauts’ Incredible Journey. According to Jennifer Verdick, head of partnerships and events for Amazon Prime Video, the Victorian-style carnival concept was chosen as it directly ties into the scene from the film where the

protagonists begin their adventure.

The activation includes a cartoonist who sketches caricatures of attendees.
Jeff Lovin
“Amazon is obsessed with customer experience, and it is no different when it comes to our original films. We’re targeting all movie lovers and reaching the widest possible audience,” Verdick said. “Immersive activations like The Aeronauts’ Incredible Journey allow us to build excitement at both the local and national level, but more importantly, to create an authentic emotional connection.”

Along with balloon rides for attendees, the promotional events will take over local weather forecasts, with meteorologists

reporting city conditions live from the balloon.

Faux newspapers serve as on-theme props.
Jeff Lovin

The L.A. kickoff also featured a second hot air balloon with a 20-foot LED screen that projected the film for attendees. Verdick said the flexible screen took 18 months to make, and that the balloon is raised with conventional propane to remain rigid for the screening.

While The Aeronauts’ Incredible Journey is making six stops, the screening will only be repeated in Phoenix.

Amazon Prime Video will release the film in theaters Dec. 6 and on the streaming platform Dec. 20.

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