THE WEEK AHEAD ON THE BIG SCREEN

ADELE POISED TO WIN BIG AT GRAMMYS

In Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance, Nicolas Cage punches Satan. He punches Satan in the face. Beat that, Dark Knight! Top that, Man of Steel! Ghost Rider will never be as popular as Batman or Superman. There will never be a mad rush for Ghost Rider pajamas and lunchboxes. The character of Johnny Blaze — a motorcycle stuntman who turns into a flaming skeleton and sucks the souls out of people — never really entered mainstream culture. Technically, he’s not even a superhero. And unlike the upcoming Spider-Man and Avengers films, which are due during the competitive summer movie season, Spirit of Vengeance is riding into theaters Friday, in the middle of winter, without screening in advance for critics.

That’s the same stealth approach Sony Pictures used when they released the first Ghost Rider film in 2007. The reviews, when they appeared, were scathing. On the Internet, where geek culture reigns supreme, the movie is often ridiculed as an example of how not to adapt a comic-book character into film. But Ghost Rider earned $228 million worldwide. Spirit of Vengeance, which was directed by the filmmaking duo of Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor (Crank, Gamer) in their usual breakneck, I-can’t-believe-what-I-just-saw style, and boasts some sensational 3D effects, may well out-gross the original.

And Ghost Rider’s somewhat disreputable aura is a perfect match for Cage. The actor is a diehard comic-book fan who named his son Kal-El; was once set to play Superman for director Tim Burton; circled the role of the Joker in The Dark Knight for a time. Amid all that, Cage somehow managed to keep his professional résumé intact. He played Spider-Man’s arch-nemesis Green Goblin but also scored in Drive, a thriller that earned him a best supporting actor Oscar nomination. And he has a role in The Amazing Spider-Man and the upcoming Thor.

But Cage is best known for his role in the first Ghost Rider film, which, given the reviews, was a surprise hit. He’s also the star of the upcoming Haywire, which costars Gina Carano and Michael Douglas. Cage seems to be playing a version of his screen persona in Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance. When he’s not fighting off demons, he’s usually fighting off demons.

JASIN BOLAND

IN ‘GHOST RIDER: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE’ NICOLAS CAGE CONTINUES TO DO THINGS HIS WAY

BY MIREN RODRIGUEZ
mrodriguez@miamiherald.com

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AN EXHIBIT OF FRENCH WORKS AT THE FROST MUSEUM REVEALS FLORIDA COLLECTORS' INTEREST IN THIS STEPCHILD OF CONTEMPORARY ART.

For instance, the sculpture of the Arts and the Consul-France-Florida Foundation engaged the help of the approached the Frost and entered ones that combined had significant works from that major and minor collections in Florida. She discovered the art collector, particularly on to what she thought was a shows. But then she caught auctions, fairs or museum several exceptions, they have American art world — with 30's trail-blazer relatively unknown for his side of the ocean who goes by Ben. He is a self-taught artist and son of Ho-locute surveryors, and his multi-media installations al- so deal with histories, or reality, memories. His 289 pieces have consists of stacks of folded clothes, with blurred black-and-white portraits hanging above, each individually.

Another alcove, three paintings by Phil-pppe Peppet from the La Creux Collection. Peppet is part of a younger generation who refocused on the figu- ate as opposed to the ab- tract) in painting. He is a self-taught artist and son of Ho-locute surveyors, and his multi-media installations al- so deal with histories, or reality, memories. His 289 pieces have consists of stacks of folded clothes, with blurred black-and-white portraits hanging above, each individually.

If you go “Tour de France/Florida” rains through March 18 at the Frost Art Museum at Florida International University, 10755 SW 17th St., 305-348-2890, the- Frost-Sueto, Free admiss.

HIGH ART: Jacques Hebbert’s “Cherry Composition” is displayed so high on a wall that it requires binoculars (provided) to study it.

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FLORIDA Aficionados who have found their way to this exhibit. Many personal stories and views are brought together for this broad statement, creating a display that is poetic, fas- cinating and informative.

The unique nature of this exhibit should be the viewer before even entering the museum. How many South Floridians are even familiar with contemporary French art? Miami is a Latin Amer- ican and Caribbean capital, so art from these regions is part of the landscape. Ger- man and British artists have made global splashes in the last decades, as has art from Japan and more recently China. But the homes of some of the most important artistic movements of the last centuries — Impres- sionism and Cubism, Surre- alism and Dada — seemed to have been forgotten in the era after World War II.

As it turns out, it may have been overshadowed and not by any means dead.

When French curator Martine Buissart moved to South Florida several years ago, she knew that French art was a step-child in the American art world — with several exceptions, they were not big players in the auctions, fairs or museum shows. But then she caught on to what she thought was a very American institution, the art collection, particularly in Florida. She discovered that major and minor collectors throughout the state had significant works from contemporary French art- ists, ones that combined could show off an over- looked half-century. She ap- proached the Frost and en- gaged the help of the Franco-Florida Foundation of the Arts and the Commis- sion of General of France.

The catalogue reveals is evident from first glance. For instance, the sculptures that open the exhibit — a gathering of 15 born objects, set up like chess pieces but with shapes more reminis- cent of individuals hirs- tory, belonging to the collection of Miamian Mar- tin Magpily. Called Com- mandment III, it’s part of a series from sculptor Alain Kirili, who has worked closely with musicians and authors during the creation of his work and has large, public sculptures across France.

Words, text and story-telling supply the inspira- tion for much of the art here. Such as the case with a work from an artist that many will recognize: Sophie Calle. Though known for her pho- tographs that cherish with intimate narratives, Calle is also a novelist. Her embroi- dered text piece in the show, "Quintessence," is a signature piece from Chris- tian Boltanski, who represents but not as much of a Medieval toral history of Paris — that white ink drawing — a pic- ture of Paris — that unites across a wall. The artist, Jean-Pierre Tholard, is really as much of a Medieval scribbles as a contemporary artist, says Buissart. He painstakingly started from left to right, with ink and feather, to draw Paris Big Bang in glorious detail, in an illustration styled with thousands of tiny images of buildings, people, birds and symbols. The view is dizzy- ing.

Madame piece is one of a number from the Stucki- arch of Concrete and Vi- sual Poetry. The extensive works to the home of Miami collectors Ruth and Mayer Stucki were the basis for the exhibit, explains Buiss- art. As the name of this art- icle reveals, they have de- fined their collection with world works, many of them from France.

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