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MARKETPLACE

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HEADLINE: USC'S MARTIN KAPLAN DISCUSSES SYNTHESPIANS

ANCHORS: DAVID BRANCACCIO

BODY:

DAVID BRANCACCIO, anchor: Let's define a term, Martin Kaplan, associate dean of the Annenberg School at the University of Southern California. The term is synthespian.

Dr. MARTIN KAPLAN (University of Southern California): Synthespian is an actor generated by a computer. It's someone who looks not like Bambi but like you or me and who can be put into a picture and say and do anything you want.

BRANCACCIO: Talking about this because a film's coming out soon called ~~the~~ ~~Fantasy~~ ~~Fantasy~~. I've seen the trailer and the characters in this don't look like cartoons. They look almost like slightly smooth real people.

Dr. KAPLAN: Yes. And--and Dr. Aki Ross, for example, has 60,000 individually created hair follicles, which means that when she swirls her head around she doesn't look like Blondie or Daffy Duck. She looks like Cheryl Teigs when she does it. The consequence is that viewers, it is believed, will forget that they are artificially created and react to them just as if they were highly paid SAG actors.

BRANCACCIO: Highly paid SAG actors. That's an interesting point. You would not have to pay the computer image a residual.

Dr. KAPLAN: No. In fact, the truth about pictures is that the most profitable movies--not the highest grossing but the most profitable--have traditionally been successful animated pictures because you don't only not have to pay residuals, you don't have to pay pension, health and welfare. You don't have to pay back ends. No one is a first-dollar gross participant in any of these things. All your costs are in the front end.

BRANCACCIO: They also don't have bad hair days, they don't make unreasonable demands about their trailer space.