



**ANIPLEX OF AMERICA AND FUNIMATION TO RELEASE THEATRICAL FILM
“SWORD ART ONLINE THE MOVIE -PROGRESSIVE- ARIA OF A STARLESS NIGHT”**

Film is Based on Anime Series Exploring Futuristic Virtual Reality World



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For a promotional trailer, please click [here](#).

Culver City and Santa Monica, California (September 29, 2021) – Funimation, the market leader in anime globally, along with partner Aniplex of America, will be releasing a brand new theatrical adventure, ***Sword Art Online the Movie -Progressive- Aria of a Starless Night***, part of the official canon of the long-running anime series.

The film will be released in theaters and on IMAX screens on **December 3, 2021**, in the United States and Canada (with tickets on sale November 5); **December 9, 2021**, in Australia and New Zealand (with tickets on sale November 9); and coming soon to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Latin America. The film will be released both in Japanese with English subtitles as well as dubbed in English. The film has a running time of 1 hour and 37 minutes and is directed by Ayako Kono with animation production from A-1 Pictures.

Based on the original story from Reki Kawahara (Dengeki Bunko), ***Sword Art Online the Movie - Progressive- Aria of a Starless Night*** travels back to the beginning of the saga where players find themselves trapped inside the world’s first VRMMORPG, Sword Art Online, with no way out. The film

introduces the story through **Asuna's** perspective as she struggles to cope with the realities of her new world and her fateful encounter with **Kirito**. The film also introduces a new mysterious character, **Mito**, but not much is known about her.

Official Synopsis

This is a tale of the time before “Lightning Flash” and “The Black Swordsman” were known by those names...

The day that she happened to don the NerveGear, Asuna Yuuki was a third-year middle school student who'd never even touched an online game before. On November 6, 2022, the world's first VRMMORPG, Sword Art Online, is officially launched. But the players, still euphoric over having logged in, suddenly find themselves trapped inside the game when the Game Master deprives them of any way to log out.

The Game Master then gives them this warning “This may be a game, but it's not something you play.” If a player dies in-game, they die in the real world.

Hearing this, all of the players panic, and pandemonium reigns. One of those players is Asuna, but despite not yet knowing the rules of this world, she sets off to conquer the floating iron castle, Aincrad, whose peak is too high to be seen. As the days go by in this world where death is never very far away, she has a fateful encounter. And then, a parting...

Though she's at the mercy of the reality before her eyes, Asuna fights on with all her might until someone appears before her: the aloof swordsman, Kirito...

Official Cast

Kirito: Yoshitsugu Matsuoka (Japanese voice); Bryce Papenbrook (English voice)

Asuna: Haruka Tomatsu (Japanese voice); Cherami Leigh (English voice)

Mito: Inori Minase (Japanese voice)

Sword Art Online the Movie -Progressive- Aria of a Starless Night is distributed in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand by Funimation and Aniplex of America.

About Aniplex of America Inc.

Aniplex of America, Inc. (Santa Monica, California) is a subsidiary of Aniplex, Inc. (headquartered in Tokyo, Japan), a division of Sony Music Entertainment (Japan), Inc., and a leading provider of anime content and music production and distribution in Japan. The company's ever-growing lineup of shows includes: *Sword Art Online*, *FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST: BROTHERHOOD*, *Fate/stay night [Unlimited Blade Works]*, *Fate/Zero*, *KILL la KILL*, *Gurren Lagann*, *Monogatari series*, *Anohana -The Flower We Saw That Day-*, *Cells at Work!*, *The Promised Neverland*, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, *The Millionaire Detective – Balance: UNLIMITED*, and many more. In 2017, the company released the English version of the popular mobile game, *Fate/Grand Order*.

About Funimation

If it's anime, it's Funimation.

As the market leader in anime, we proudly deliver incredible fan experiences across television, feature films, events, collectibles, and the Funimation App.

Headquartered in the US and connected by a global network, our anime-obsessed team serves the fandom in over 52 countries and 10 languages. With over 400 team members, we've built a global community where fans and their passion will always have a place to belong.

Funimation is an independently operated joint venture between US-based Sony Pictures Entertainment, and Japan's Aniplex, a subsidiary of Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc., both subsidiaries of Tokyo-based Sony Group Corporation.

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