



PRESS RELEASE

**SKYDANCE TELEVISION FORMS MULTI-YEAR OVERALL AGREEMENT
WITH AWARD-WINNING WRITER-PRODUCERS PATRICK MASSETT AND JOHN ZINMAN**

Duo Set as Showrunners for First-Ever Live Action TV Series Based on Sword Art Online

Santa Monica, CA – September 28, 2017 – Skydance Television today announced that it has augmented its growing roster of creative talent by entering into a multi-year overall agreement with award-winning writer-producers Patrick Massett and John Zinman (*Friday Night Lights*, *The Blacklist*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*).

The studio currently has several projects in development with the pair, including the first-ever live action television series for *Sword Art Online* (SAO), the massive Japanese novel and anime franchise to which Skydance acquired the global rights last year. Massett and Zinman will serve as writers, showrunners, and executive producers on the Skydance series. Together with Massett and Zinman, Laeta Kalogridis (*Avatar*, *Altered Carbon*) will write the pilot episode and serve as an executive producer on the SAO series alongside David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, and Marcy Ross. Kalogridis, who has an exclusive overall deal at Skydance, first introduced the studio to the property and the world of SAO.

“Patrick and John have shown incredible range in their storytelling capabilities, from subtle character drama to big, world-building action, and we are beyond fortunate that they have joined the Skydance family,” said Skydance Television President Marcy Ross. “We’re already deep in development with Patrick, John, and Laeta on our larger than life Skydance SAO series, in which we aim not only to satisfy the franchise’s enthusiastic sci-fi and anime fan base but also to appeal to new TV audiences the world over.”

“The fantastical world of SAO offers an unparalleled opportunity to tell stories that resonate on both an epic and human scale. We couldn’t ask for better partners than Skydance and Laeta to help us bring this global pop culture phenomenon to new life on television,” said Massett and Zinman in a joint statement.

Skydance’s SAO series will follow brilliant young beta tester Kirito and his group of friends when they are trapped, along with 10,000 other people, in a next-generation virtual reality online role-playing game filled with swordfighting, monsters, and mystery.

Massett and Zinman’s television careers began with *Veritas: The Quest* at ABC, which they co-created and executive produced before going on to co-executive produce the Emmy® Award winning *Friday Night Lights* at NBC, *The Chicago Code* at FOX, and *Last Resort* at ABC. The duo then co-executive produced *The Blacklist* at NBC. Their most recent television credit includes

executive producers and showrunners at NBC's *The Player*. The pair got their start in film by co-writing *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* and their most recent film, *Gold* was released in January 2017. Their films *Resistance* and *Sea of Thunder* are currently in pre-production.

Skydance Television's current slate includes six series across nearly as many networks. Skydance has recently entered into overall and first-look deals with some of the industry's top talent, including Sam Raimi, Marti Noxon, Laeta Kalogridis, Michael B. Jordan, Bonnie Curtis, and Julie Lynn.

About Skydance Televison

Skydance Media's rapidly growing and critically acclaimed television division is now a leading supplier of premium scripted content to broadcast, cable, and digital platforms alike. Its diverse slate of original programming currently includes the Emmy-nominated *Grace and Frankie* on Netflix, *Altered Carbon* on Netflix, *Jack Ryan* on Amazon, and *Condor* on AT&T Audience Network. The Company also has *Ten Days in the Valley* on ABC and *Dietland* on AMC under its Uncharted label. *Ten Days in the Valley* premieres Sunday, October 1st at 10|9c on ABC.

Contact

Shannon Olivas
Corporate Communications
[\(424\) 291-3485](tel:(424)291-3485)
solivas@skydance.com

#