

1 cm water







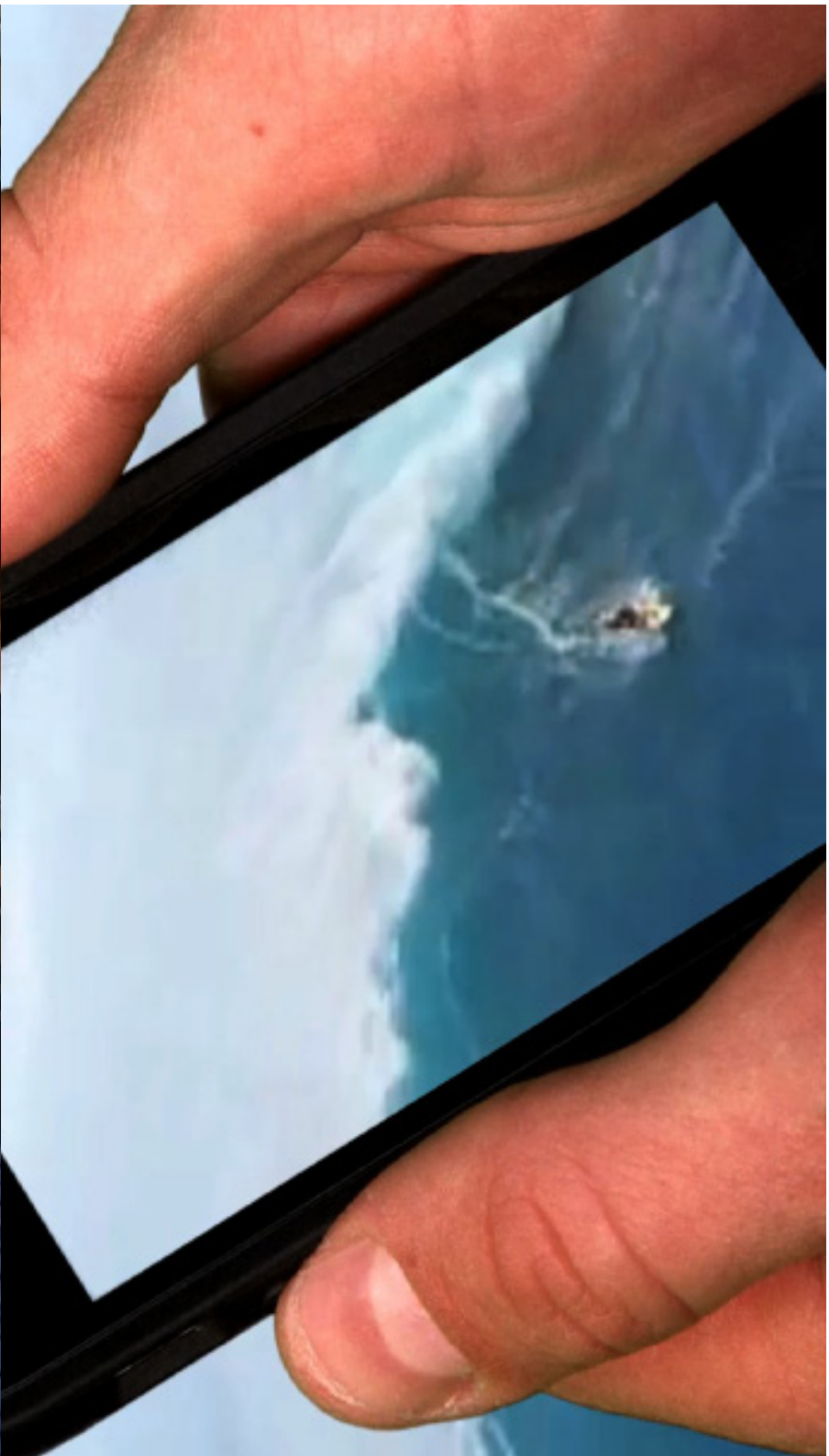
#Superswim

swim

faster than the speed of light moving through air is different than the speed of light moving through water.

#superswim #beawolther







tumblr. Find and follow posts tagged #hokusai

Sign Up

Login

A grid of 12 Tumblr posts, each featuring a different interpretation of Hokusai's "The Great Wave off Kanagawa". The posts are arranged in two columns of six. Each post includes a user profile picture, a username, and a small thumbnail of the artwork. The usernames are: trinceas, the-drawing-center, blissfulrealizations, naturalismachine, purerethedigitallover, and artHistorypoise in the first column; and rons, jameshoys, careto-carwas, jap-antlowe, and cangart in the second column. The artwork is characterized by vibrant colors and a stylized, modern aesthetic.

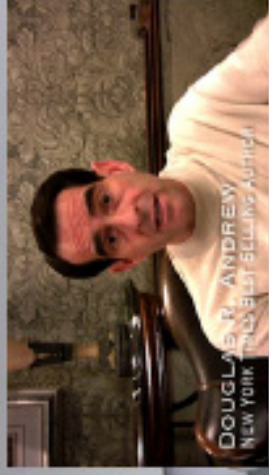


#THESTORMISBLOWING



Money

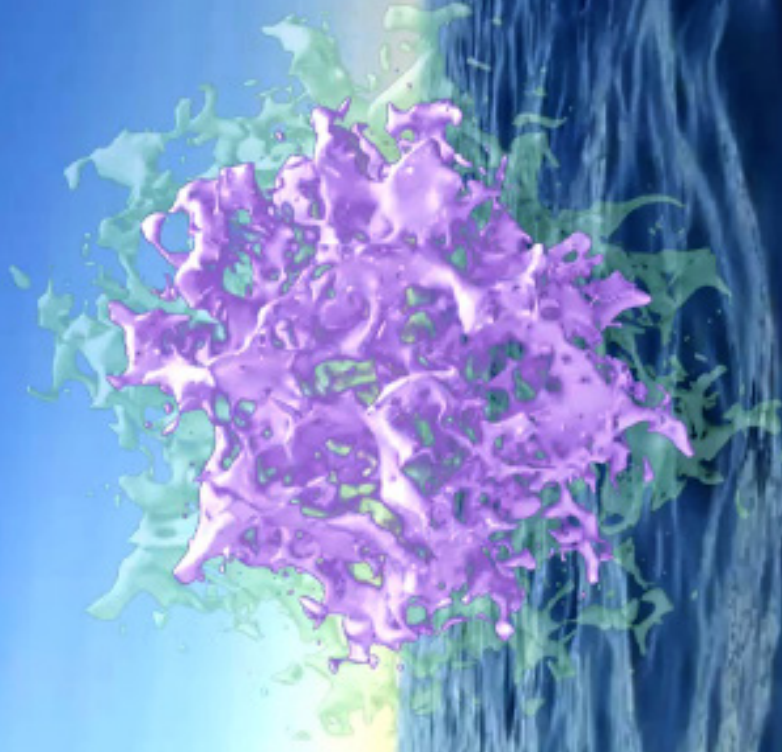
Profi V. Halkov.com





or I was able to be in many places at the same time.



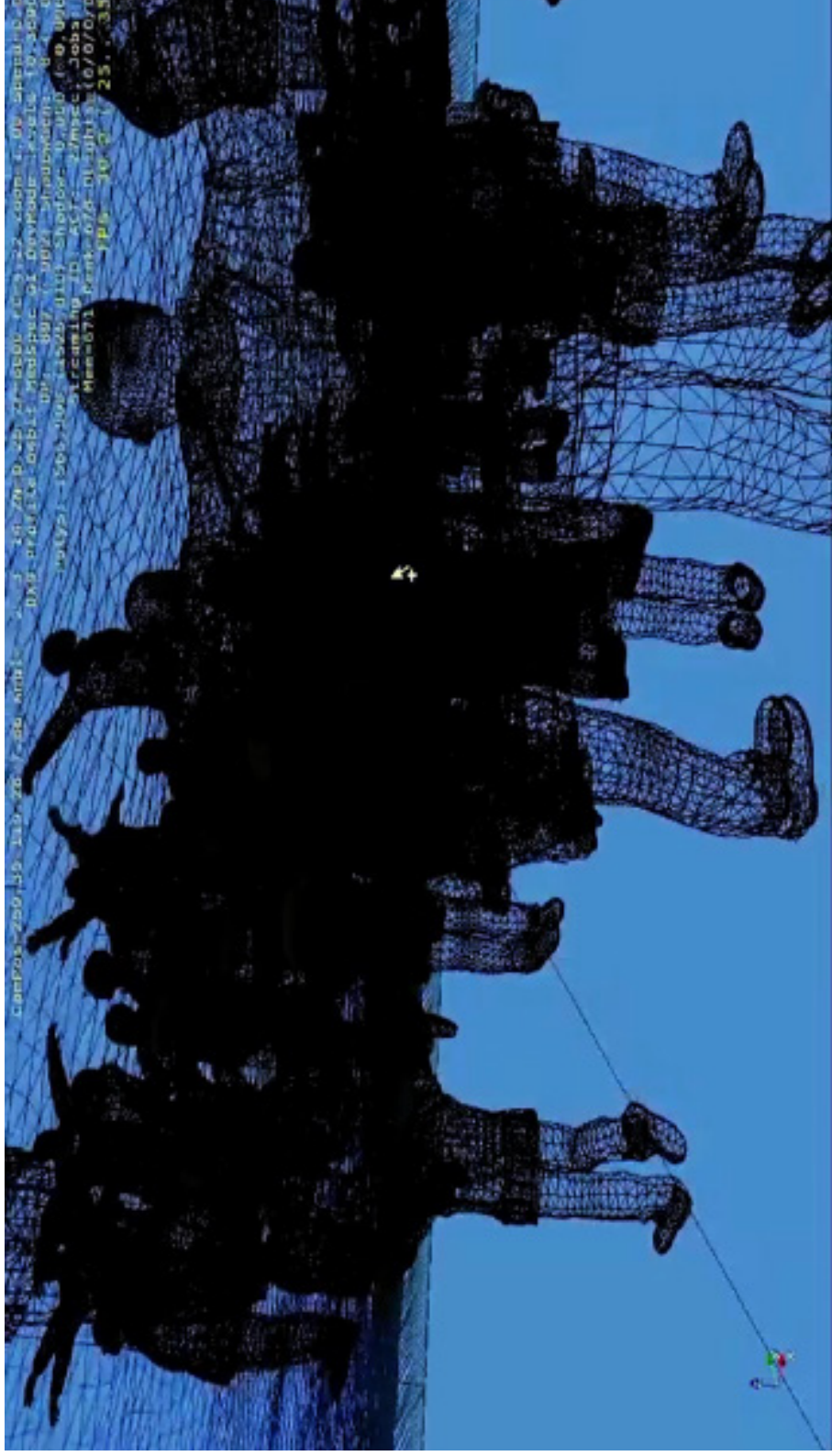


ASSET



CamPos=209|35 110 28 7 48 6nu1r
0 3 14 28 0 25 27 6000 Num 24 Zoom 1.08 Speed 0.0
DAB profile 6611 MidSpac 01 DayMode Levels 10 800
Psi 24 241 SpeedoPatch 8 1 1
Volys 98 23 298 257 ShowPos 0 Poly 1 0 106
Streamline 10 ACT 27muset 0002
Heme63 heme678 01 0111111 10/07/07
FPS 61.5 1 45. 00









Karen Archey

Hyper-Elasticity
Symptoms, Signs,
Treatment:
On Hito Steyerl's
Liquidity Inc.

If we recall the year 1995 and the gestational stages of the dot-com boom, the West's cultural imaginary was tellingly gripped by the nerdy-sexy-cool cyberpunk, the "terrorist" more at home online than off. Netscape Communications, creator of the erstwhile popular Netscape Navigator web browser, made an extremely successful IPO the same year, the company switching from being unprofitable to valued at \$2.9 billion in one business day. The movies *Hackers* and *The Net* were both released in 1995 – who can forget the razor-sharp, pillow-lipped cyber-terrorist portrayed by Angelina Jolie – cementing that, in the mid-'90s, nothing was a more exciting or fraught territory, economically or socially, than the internet. 'All I remember is when I looked at my computer screen in the morning, you could see the companies that were just growing in value,' explains former financial analyst Jacob Wood, star subject of Hito Steyerl's video *Liquidity Inc.* (2014):

'That started in the internet boom around 1995 when Netscape went public...Whether or not [these companies] were making money or whether they had no business model, people just wanted a part of that action. You could just throw money anywhere at that time. Things were blowing up. At that time, we thought everything would be internet-based and that we were entering a new world.'

Wood's last statement is the most telling: at that historical moment, we were so untethered by the introduction of the Internet that we thought the digital would subsume every aspect of our lives, perhaps even our bodies and minds. These speculative conditions continue to pop up contemporaneously, ad nauseam, many of them seemingly fabricated. We hear about exhaustion from unending streams of images; Ray Kurzweil's *The Singularity* (professing that eventually artificial intelligence will supersede human intelligence); as well as our attention spans, says Nicholas Carr, that are becoming fractured and more shallow. But, in contradistinction to the cultural consciousness of 1995, what marks our current moment

is the continued subsistence of the haptic, and how data – specifically corporate-farmed data – suffuses not just our activity on the web, but also our experiences offline. This data, which could be described as "performance-enhancing", permeates previously established boundaries of the digital and the real, dictating advances in product design, branding, interior architecture and so on. Steyerl's recent essay "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?",¹ which covers similar ground as *Liquidity Inc.*, proffers that the proliferation of data in contemporary society transcends the distinction between IRL and online space. Likewise, what is an image but code, and what is code but text? This condition of digital-physical liquidity, suggests Steyerl, characterises our contemporary historical moment.

As luck would have it, Wood did eventually enter a new world – not digitally, but professionally. Rather, Wood lost his job as an analyst amidst the 2008 economic crash, switching fields to fight professionally in Mixed Martial Arts, which had previously been his hobby. We all know these situations: play becomes a job, your friends become employers, sleep turns into "me time". These transitional states and the precarity accompanying them, are so difficult to navigate that they become nearly incomprehensible. Such tangled, fluid strata of work, life, and play (and their relationship to the 2008 economic crash) lie at the heart of *Liquidity Inc.*

Both words and images related to the subject of "liquidity" flow ambiguously throughout Steyerl's half-hour video, the term referencing financial assets and high frequency trading, water and its manifestation as weather, as well as the necessary elasticity of the post-Fordist labourer. Images run the gamut from thousands of dollars worth of CGI to clip art didactics with anime scenes and charged blips from art history (Hokusai's *Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1829-32) and Klee's *Angelus Novus* (1920)) thrown in for good measure.

The "inc." in *Liquidity Inc.* refers to Jacques Derrida's book *Limited Inc.* (1988), and its refutation of speech-act theory theorised by John Searle. Practically, the term "incorporation" describes both the processes of assuming

bodily form as well as a company becoming a legal entity. Incorporation entails ‘the act of uniting several persons into one fiction called a corporation, in order that they may be no longer responsible for their actions.’² The term’s etymological roots further evince its function in describing the liquidity and changing states of matter that Steyerl focuses on:

“incorporation” coming from the late Latin *incorporat-* ‘embodied,’ from the verb *incorporare*, from in- ‘into’ + Latin *corporare* ‘form into a body’ (from *corpus*, *corpor-* ‘body’).

More traditional in format than *Liquidity Inc.*, Steyerl’s past work usually conforms to a well-worn narrative structure. *Adorno’s Grey* (2012), for example, reflects on the abstract theories of the philosopher through the story of three female students flashing their breasts mid-lecture at Adorno, who promptly ran out of the room, never to return to the Academy. Equally, *How Not to Be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* (2013), takes the form of a seven-point education video, teaching us, albeit somewhat hyperbolically, how to disappear in an age marked by machine surveillance. *Liquidity Inc.* however, evades both a guiding narrative and operational structure – the video’s slippery form matching its content. Within *Liquidity Inc.*’s watery world, this dispersed focus is echoed by the diversity of subjects, images, narrators and soundtracks, endlessly popping up, dissolving and looping. Surf footage inlaid into iPhone or television screens pops up frequently, further suggesting that the contemporary condition of liquidity calls for the subject to quickly skid along at surface level, or else, perhaps, they’ll drown. ‘Water can flow or it can crash,’ says Bruce Lee, who has been pasted into an iPhone screen. ‘Be formless, be shapeless... Be water, my friend.’

The biography and commentary of Jacob Wood, the former Lehmann Brothers analyst, provides the video’s only narrative arc, and even this remains loosely hewn. Through Wood, the allusion of water is tied to financial precarity, both athletic and professional performance, as well as positional

elasticity. We see Wood going through the motions of his old morning routine – getting ready to work as an analyst, putting on a suit and tie, sitting at a desk while reflecting on his professional transition to working in Mixed Martial Arts. “You’ve got to adapt to whatever is happening,” Wood says of his being laid off.

‘It’s kind of like fighting [...] what you saw [in martial arts] was people becoming hybrid fighters. They became versed in everything. That’s what makes [MMA] so exciting. That’s what makes things liquid and fluid.’

Wood’s take on liquidity speaks to the advantageous effects of mass adaptability. If you can kickbox, know judo and karate in MMA fights, you’ll probably outperform your opponent who is only versed in jiu jitsu. Likewise, mass adaptability is now a necessity professionally and economically and financial liquidity – as an infomercial presenter reminds us in *Liquidity Inc.* – is our lifeline to basic necessities such as food and rent in the case of economic catastrophe, such as what many experienced in 2008. ‘You don’t want to be frozen, that’s the kiss of death,’ says Jacob, ‘so you’re always being liquid and moving whether you’re striking, faking fainting, or doing take-downs. That’s why, in a fight, they’ll always keep the action moving.’ It has become necessary to diversify in order to financially “stay afloat”, regardless of whether work-induced ADHD allows us to focus. Artists too, are far from immune to this – becoming the flexible worker *par excellence*. Steyerl, for example, must teach, write and maintain an artistic practice full time.

Some of Steyerl’s previous videos have often drawn meaning through serendipitously timed events, such as *In Free Fall* (2011), which focuses on the year 1929 – e.g. the previous major stock market crash, the publishing of Sergei Tetyakov’s “The Biography of the Object,” the filming of *Hell’s Angels*, etc. etc. – *Liquidity Inc.*’s formlessness places the onus on the viewer to manifest their own conclusions about the significance of her juxtapositioned subjects. What could be the connection between ‘mass aesthetics’ and

corporate aesthetics, or that betwixt a pulsating animated GIF of Hokusai and a laid-off financial analyst? Notably, Steyerl's shift to a more porous relationship between concept and form developed simultaneous to the increased demand for her work as an artist – her content perhaps embodying the professional schizophrenia experienced by the artist. This heightened focus on Steyerl's work seems at least in part due to the art world finally waking up to idea that it is incumbent upon us to analyse our increasingly complex relationship to advanced technology and the circulation of images – a field Steyerl has long championed and to which the litany of younger artists who revere her work bears testament.

Returning to the film, footage of Jacob and MMA fights give way to a fictionalised, rather poetic weather report by “terrorists”, a scene inspired by the real-life website The Weather Underground, which curiously took its title from the late 20th century American radical Leftist terrorist group of the same name (who in turn took it from a lyric in the Bob Dylan song *Subterranean Homesick Blues* (1965)). These terrorists, one a man in sunglasses and the other a young girl, are disguised in oversized owl T-shirts and ski masks. The older man, in a computer-generated English drawl, states,

‘You will ask yourself questions like: what is the history of wind? How did this gust arrive here? Where did it come from and who am I to be blown by it? The storm is blowing people back to their homes, blowing goods back to their factories blowing factories back to their countries, blowing people back into their past.’

The report is given against a green-screened map of trade winds and blinking animated gifs of Hokusai's *The Great Wave Off Kanagawa*. Weather, notably, remains one of the few forces that man consistently tries and fails to control, and is dominated by narratives as bizarre as Wilhelm Reich's cloudbusters, which feature in *Liquidity Inc.*

One can also attribute Steyerl's interest in the cloud to the geopolitics of cloud computing: like the weather, cloud

computing is a system invisible and almost incalculably sublime to the common man, but has its roots in very real phenomena; specifically, servers regulated by the government of the nation in which these structures are located. (This is why, for example, the American government would have access to information about a Finnish person's purchase from Amazon, even if that transaction happened on a computer in Finland, because Amazon's servers exist on American soil.) The lack of the public's widespread familiarity with these policies illustrates our current passive relationship to understanding the social and political ramifications of network technology.

Steyerl's allusions to terror and collapse all suggest that systems such as weather and financial trading are structurally unstable. The video's beginning splices clips of Jacob fighting or narrating his personal history to CGI of water, which, in a feat of elastic identity, serves as the video's silent narrator. ‘I am water and I am not from here,’ says the water in bubbly silver lettering.

‘...Some would like to claim me as a native of earth, but in fact, even though I cover this planet, I am not from here. Nor are you. I run through your veins. Your eyes. Your touchscreens and portfolios. I am gushing through your heart, plumbing and wires. I am liquidity incorporated.’

This sublime fact – that, 60% of the human body is composed of an extraterrestrial element – suggests a literal and figurative alienation to our own bodies, one heightened, in the Marxist sense, by late capitalism. The otherworldly narrator's radical perspective on our current historical moment defamiliarises us with the more absurd aspects of contemporary life to which we've become inured. Why do we work 12-hour days? Why do the 85 richest people in the world have as much wealth as the 3.5 billion poorest? Why is Chelsea Manning, a woman who helped uncover grave human rights atrocities, one of the most condemned human beings on the planet? If a “crash” suggests the dissolution of a preexisting system or structure – whether it be personal

as in the case of a nervous break down, or societal as in the case of a stock market crash – the rebuilding period after the cataclysmic event is perhaps the most telling.

While it seems cumbersome to make neat conclusions about Steyerl's work, there's a telling moment towards the end of *Liquidity Inc.*. Announcing the weather, the child terrorist-meteorologist recites, 'Low pressure system Andrea Wolf moving east this evening. Compact tear gas clouds gathering after midday. Weak winds, if you finally manage to focus.' Here, Steyerl again draws in her childhood friend and radical leftist activist Andrea Wolf, who died in 1998 as a political martyr of the Kurdistan Worker's Party. Given that it has been 15 years since Wolf's death, her constant appearance in Steyerl's work (Wolf is at least mentioned in all Steyerl's videos, and forms the main subject of several, including *November* (2004) and *Abstract* (2012)) transitions from a work of mourning into a gesture of solidarity. Similar to Jean-Luc Godard's solidarity with Vietnam, as told in his film *Camera-Eye* (1967), which led him to at least cursorily reference the country in the rest of his films, Steyerl has continually used Wolf to point outside the spheres of artistic practice and academia into the realm of world politics.

What are world politics in the West today, but images and text, again, made up of code? Steyerl's allusions to Wolf act as prescient reminder that agency, increasingly indistinguishable in late capitalism, exists in varying shades – and are, outside of Western contexts, variably more dark, or potentially a site for radical change.

1 Hito Steyerl, "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?", in *e-flux journal* no. 49 (2013), accessed March 2014, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead/>.

2 "Incorporation," online, accessed March 2014, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=incorporation&search_mode=none.

