

# Athantor



Athantor is a joint media art project by Roswitha Maul and Andreas Großmann from 2014. Due to various project related and external reasons, it has been redesigned and further developed in the last ten years. Athantor is intended to link our basic need for social encounters, warmth and communication with the issue of an increased consumption of energy in server networks.

The art installation consists of a resin sculpture whose shape is taken from a historical oven and five servers installed in a server rack in the lower part of the installation.

Athantor points to the ancient human need to create a warm place for communication and asks about the places where we create heat and where communication is created. Svetlana Kibke: „From as early as the creation of the first tiled stoves in ancient times, the heat and energy production remains an essential part of human history to this day.“

see catalog „EnergiewendeKunst“, 2015

Athantor  
2014  
resin ,steel,  
5 server  
10 CPU'S  
webseite: [www.roswitha-maul.de](http://www.roswitha-maul.de)  
warmth, noise  
300 cm x 100cm x 100 cm



Energiewendekunst  
silent green, Berlin

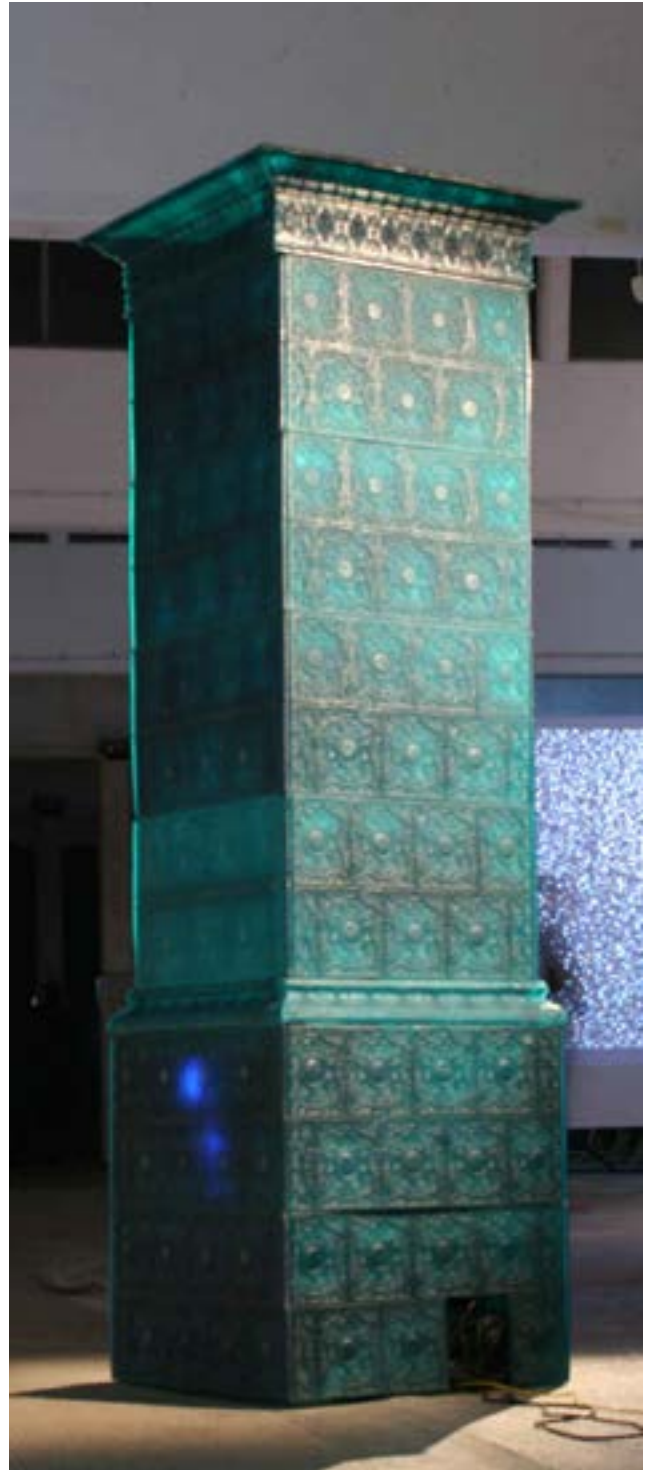
Photo: Svante Wellershoff, 2014

## Version I 2014-2017

Visitors can touch the sculpture and feel the warmth on the surface. A website informs about the current measured temperature inside and how the heat is generated. In 2014, the issue of energy consumption in server farms has not been widely discussed. How often do we click on websites a day? How many server nodes on the World Wide Web are fueled by it? Athanor was intended to draw attention to these issues and visualize alternative options. At that time, technologies began to emerge that reuse heat from servers for water heating and also for heating rooms in low energy houses.

Five servers computing for Seti@home provided a large amount of heat in the showroom.

Seti was a project of Berkely University that computed data sets from radio telescopes already used for astronomical research a second time in order to search for extraterrestrial life. Seti@home was the first to use grid computing exclusively with volunteer participants from the general population and is considered a pioneer of this way of working. It seemed particularly fitting to Roswitha Maul and Andreas Großmann to participate in this project for the first version of Athanor. Grid computing is now the basis for heating smaller properties with server heat.



Generate! Festival für elektronische Künste  
Shedhalle, Tübingen

Photo: Roswitha Maul



inside view

Seti@home ended its operation in 2020; extraterrestrial life was not found. Just as the alchemists did not succeed in creating the philosopher's stone in their melting athanors. It would have been too nice, if a visually recognizable proof for extraterrestrial life would have recalibrated our self-image.

Screenshot of the website [www.roswitha-maul.de](http://www.roswitha-maul.de) (2014-2017), which updates the temperature of the servers in the Athanor every minute



The Athanor project was exhibited in 2021 during the COVID pandemic. Physical meetings were held mostly in digital environments. Athanor was given a new task.

### *Athanor ServerSalon 2021- Version II*

Back in 2014, the choice was whether Athanor should work for a non-profit project or to generate coins of a cryptocurrency. Maul and Großmann decided to participate in Seti. In 2021, the servers had to be reprogrammed due to Seti's end. This time, Athanor ServerSalon tried crypto processing. The economic gain was rather poor.

In addition to the change in content, the media installation was technically enhanced. In order to let the visitors participate in the first exhibition in full lockdown, Athanor received a webcam. In the empty rooms of galerie\_inter-shop, Roswitha Maul showed her solo exhibition on regular opening hours. Visitors could watch her on the gallery's website. The individual shots of the webcam were reloaded every minute. The disappointing result of a calculation for Monero coins used electricity in the amount of 10 EUR per day with a poor gain of Moneros worth not even 1.50 EUR in 3 weeks. This experiment vividly shows how inefficient blockchains consume resources to accumulate capital.



### Athantor Ausstellungsorte

- 2014 Diplomausstellung, HfBK Dresden
- 2014 „Energiewendekunst“, silent green Berlin
- 2015 „Athantor“, by Invitation of the Bauhaus Foundation Dessau, presented at UBA Dessau
- 2015 „Generate!“ Festival für elektronische Künste, Shedhalle, Tübingen
- 2016 „and found“, Westpol-Air-Space, Leipzig
- 2017 „Athantor“, Vorhaus Dresden
- 2021 „Athantor ServerSalon“, Galerie Intershop, Leipzig

After finishing the project in 2021, Roswitha Maul decided not to connect Athantor to the network anymore. In the future, it will be presented exclusively as a complete installation only in sculptural form. This decision aimed to critically question the CO2 consumption of media installations. Athantor has provided many insights and impulses in this respect.

Roswitha Maul

\*Leipzig

2014 – 2017

Mastercourse at HfBK Dresden,  
Eberhard Bosslet

2014

Diploma bei Martin Honert

2009 – 2014

studies at HfBK Dresden,  
Wilhelm Mundt, Martin Honert

2007 – 2008

studies at Institut for Ceramic und Glass Art in  
Höhr-Grenzhausen

Grants

2022

Travel Grant of the Cultural Foundation of the Free  
State of Saxony „Show me how to build an igloo“-  
ArcticCultureLab, Greenland

2021

Project Grant by the Cultural Foundation of the Free  
State of Saxony for the catalogue „12-21“

2021

Art Fund, State Collection Dresden, Grant Purchase of  
the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony

2021

Athantor ServerSalon, Project funding by the Cultural  
Foundation of the Free State of Saxony

2021

„Denkzeit“-scholarship by Cultural Foundation of the  
Free State of Saxony

2019

Residency at IFÖ Center, Bromölla, Sweden

2018

Residency at Schaddelmühle e.V.

2018

Founding for studio expansion by the City of Dresden

2016

Scholarship, Schools of Arts, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2014

Art Award „Energiewendekunst“, Bausch-Foundation  
Neu-Kaliß