

## Stare Masters

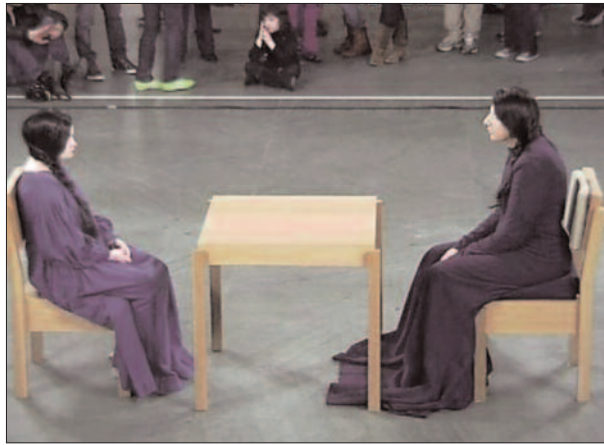
"I may spend the next three months sitting, staring at my computer now. MoMA Marina-cam is mesmerizing," **Greg Allen**, an artist and filmmaker, wrote on his Twitter account. Many agreed with him about the live video feed of **Marina Abramović's** performance *The Artist Is Present* during her retrospective of the same title at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In its first month, Marina-cam, as it became known, received an average of 10,000 hits a day.

"I like that somebody was smart enough to set up a puppy cam for performance art," quipped **Wesley Miller** on the blog for the television show *Art:21*. He was referring to the Internet's famous Shiba Inu cam, which showed a new litter eating, sleeping, and tussling from a fixed camera angle.

On MoMA's Web site, [moma.org](http://moma.org), visitors found a near-static image of Abramović and a museumgoer seated in chairs, facing each other, with a table between them. The feed was scheduled to run during museum hours throughout the exhibition, March 14 through May 31.

"I do think it's better to be there in person, but it's nice to be able to follow it," says MoMA's chief curator at large, **Klaus Biesenbach**, who organized the show.

Viewers followed what Abramović was wearing (almost invariably a long gown), who was sitting with her, and how long each person stayed. Duration was up to the participant. The



MoMA's live video feed captured Anya Liftig, left, with Marina Abramović in *The Artist Is Present*.

online content for the performance also included close-up photographs of participants.

MoMA had set up live video feeds for events and performances before, but it had never trained a daily feed on an exhibition. "Initially it didn't seem to make a lot of sense, because there really isn't much action," says MoMA's associate media producer, **David Hart**. "But the

durational aspect is so compelling. The first time someone sat all day, I couldn't help but keep checking in, and the very simple act of his getting up to leave after seven hours became a moving, cinematic moment."

Every now and then something dramatic happened. Artist **Anya Liftig** dressed and styled her hair like Abramović and sat across from her all day, as part of her own performance piece titled *The Anxiety of Influence*. And when video artist **Kate Gilmore** tuned in, she observed someone being escorted out for placing a high-heeled shoe on the table. "The Web cam is about watching the occasional crazies," Gilmore says.

For performance-art historian **Jovana Stokic**, the camera was a touchstone. "You can be at work, in the supermarket, at the beach, but you can check in and see that Marina is always there," says Stokic. "When you see how committed she is, it gives you this sense of possibility, that maybe you too can transcend mundane daily life and live on a higher level."

—*Stamatina Gregory*



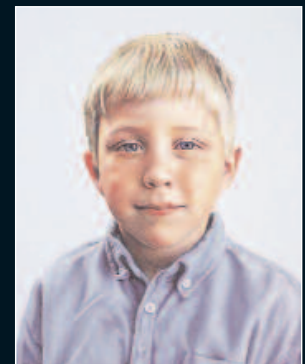
**ALL IN THE FAMILY** Collector Donald Todd originally commissioned Jim Torok to paint his immediate family, but a stream of relatives kept showing up: in-laws, children, grandchildren. In the end, Torok documented three gen-



erations of Todds, creating 23 portraits, including, from left to right, *Donald* (2003), *Stanton* (2003), *Hailey* (2000), and *Harry* (2002). The paintings, just 5 by 4 inches, are based on multiple photographs Torok took of each



subject. "The most interesting part was seeing the family resemblances," says the New York-based artist. "I noticed the eyes looked the same, or sometimes it was an expression—it's fascinating to see that expressions



can be handed down." The series, called "A Colorado Family," is on view through July 5 in the exhibition "Portraiture Now: Communities," at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

—*Kelly Nuxoll*