

The Herald

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Interest in Scottish artist surges after major documentary film is broadcast

HIS work hangs in the homes of author JK Rowling and the royal family.

Now interest in stunning artworks by the late Scottish landscape painter James Morrison has soared after a remarkable film on his life captured the hearts of tens of thousands of art lovers around the UK.

The Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh, which has represented Morrison for more than 60 years, said there had been an “overwhelming response” from throughout the UK after “Eye of the Storm” was shown on the BBC Scotland channel and BBC2 earlier this month.

The film followed the late Montrose-based artist as he prepared to paint a final landscape as his eyesight failed him.

Filmed over two years by Scottish documentary maker Anthony Baxter, it painted a remarkable portrait of the artist just months before he died last year, aged 88.

Widely regarded as one of Britain’s best contemporary landscape artists, Morrison captured the stormy seas and skies of his native Scotland as well as scenes from around the world including Africa, Canada, France and Arctic Greenland.

But while he was recognised by the art world – and collectors including the late Duke of Edinburgh – until now Morrison’s was not an instantly



The work of James Morrison was a hit with TV viewers

recognised name among the general public.

Christina Jansen of Edinburgh’s Scottish Gallery, where Morrison held 25 solo exhibitions, said yesterday that screenings of Baxter’s film had sparked an “unprecedented” reaction.

She said: “The response was phenomenal. Our website crashed due to traffic generated by the BBC2 screening, which is a first. There has been an overwhelming outpouring of emotional responses from all over the UK.

“It has been quite staggering. There were thousands of responses, all at once, from people who had connected with this artist or were touched by

his life story. We’ve had up to 12,000 people looking [at Morrison’s catalogues online]. We have a lot of traffic on our website but that is extraordinary, and that is because of the interest generated by Anthony Baxter’s very sensitive portrayal of Jim.

“As for his work, all of our publications have been wiped out and we have a very long queue of people wanting to acquire a Morrison painting.”

Morrison was born in Glasgow, and attended the Glasgow School of Art. He later moved to the north-east of Scotland with his wife. The Scottish Gallery has represented Morrison’s work since 1959.