LSU Purchases Major Painting By Englishmen

A major painting by famed English portrait artist Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) has been purchased by the LSU Anglo-American Art Museum.

University officials say the portrait, painted in 1759, is the museum's most important acquisition of the year.

Subject of the portrait was Maria Walpole (Countess Waldegrave) an English beauty of the 18th century.

James Reeve, Museum curator, said the painting, which is a preliminary study of Maria Walpole's first marriage portrait, has been fully authenticated by Ellis K. Waterhouse, the world's leading authority on the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Reynolds painted Maria Walpole's portrait seven different times during his career.

Purchased in London for the LSU Museum, the portrait is now valued at much more than the actual price paid for it. In the 19th century listings of Reynolds' work, the Walpole painting escaped the notice of catalogers and thus did not come to the attention of art collectors and dealers until recently.

Maria Walpole was the daughter of the English author, Horace Walpole, and a niece of Sir Robert Walpole, who was prime minister of King George II. Following the death of her first husband, she was later married to the Duke of Gloucester.

This year, the Anglo-American Museum has also purchased seven color lithographs by Joseph Nash, English topographical artist. The lithographs are color plates from the deluxe edition of Nash's "Mansions of England in the Olden Times," published between 1837 and 1842. Nash was among those responsible for arousing public interest during the 19th century in the preservation of England's pre-18th century houses.

A major purchase not yet completed is the addition to the Museum of a mahogany Hepplewhite secretary, made about 1800 in the New York-Philadelphia-Baltimore area.

The Museum has obtained several small items of china and silver by craftsmen of 18th century England and early 19th century America, as well as some 50 additional books on painting and furniture for the Museum library.

The Anglo-American Art Museum, unique in the region, was established in 1962 with funds given by an anonymous donor for the purpose of depicting the Anglo-American contribution to the arts. The Museum is growing in France.