

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Louis-Michel van Loo  
(Toulon 1707 – 1771 Paris)

*Portrait of Ferdinand VI*

c. 1743

oil on canvas, unlined

100 x 82 cm.;

39  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 32  $\frac{1}{4}$  in.

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Provenance

Private Collection, Spain.

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This newly discovered and unpublished portrait of Ferdinand VI, future King of Spain, can be related to the group portrait titled *The Family of Philip V* by Louis-Michel van Loo in the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. This was one of van Loo's most important commissions: executed in 1743, the group portrait depicts the Spanish King Philip V and his wife, Isabella Farnese, surrounded by their children (fig. 1). Ferdinand VI, the successor to the throne, stands proudly towards the left of the composition (fig. 2).

In this group portrait, van Loo reused and reworked models that he had previously established in individual depictions of each of the members of the royal family. As is the case with the portrait of Felipe de Borbón y Farnesio (fig. 3) – also part of the Prado's collection – the present painting of Ferdinand VI would have served as a model for his inclusion in the larger family composition. The sitter's face and pose are almost identical in the larger family portrait, as is the lace cuff on Ferdinand's right arm and his smooth, curly hair. In contrast to usual expectations of a preparatory work, the quality of the present painting parallels the final product. For instance, the different fabrics of Ferdinand VI's costume are all rendered with great detail and effectiveness.

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**Figure 1.** Louis-Michel van Loo, *The Family of Philip V*, 1743.  
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid



**Figure 2.** Louis-Michel van Loo, *The Family of Philip V* (detail), 1743.  
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

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**Figure 3.** Louis-Michel van Loo, *Felipe de Borbón y Farnesio, Infante of Spain, Duke of Parma*, 1739-1743. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid