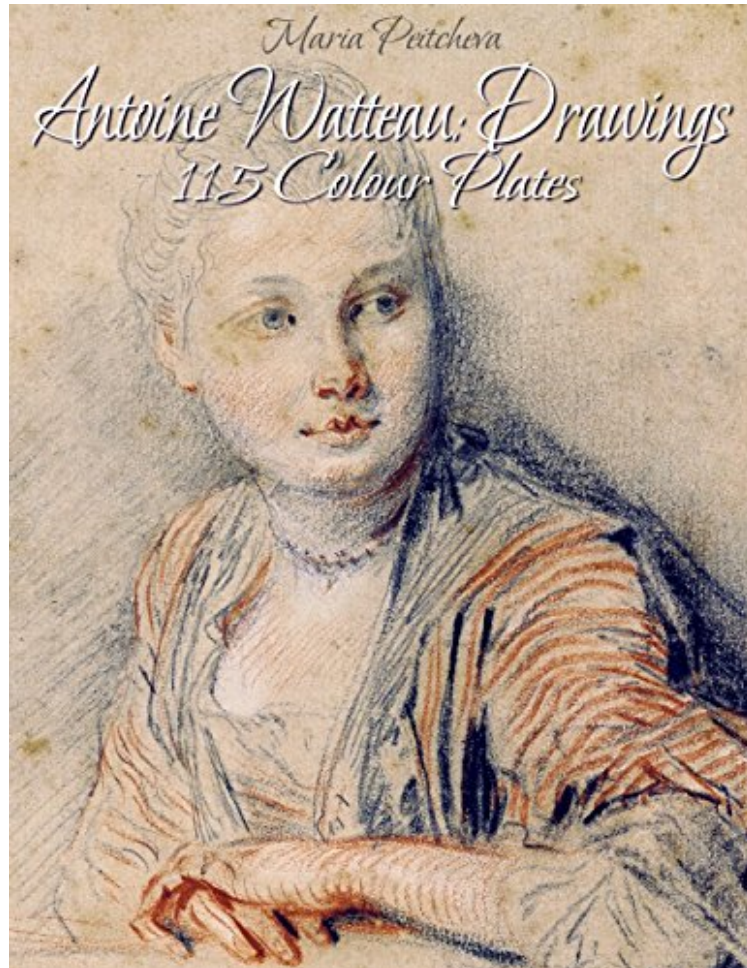


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## Antoine Watteau: Drawings 115 Colour Plates

*Maria Peitcheva*

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One of the most brilliant and original artists of the eighteenth century, Antoine Watteau had an impact on the development of Rococo art in France and throughout Europe lasting well beyond his lifetime. Living only thirty-six years, Watteau nonetheless rose from an obscure provincial background to achieve fame in the French capital. He clearly had a genuine love of music. His drawings of those playing and listening offer uncanny portraits of the way it

can heighten emotions. Equally, the play of light he orchestrates on fine fabrics, on children's skin or on various elements of his landscapes, provides a startling anticipation of the Impressionists. He is the inventor of *la scène galante*, a genre that shows the bourgeoisie at play outdoors. Many of the models were Watteau's own friends: Parisian actors and musicians he often drew. His drawing ability remains spectacular. But even more startling is his modernity.