

Soul of the Chrysanthemum

The artist Elihu Vedder created a drawing called *Soul of the Sunflower* and later produced a similar image, titled *Soul of the Chrysanthemum*. The basis for *Soul of the Sunflower* was the mythological story about the water nymph, Clytie, and her unrequited love for the sun god, Apollo. The image displays a female face with organic, wild hair resembling flower petals. The story ends with Clytie slowly transforming into a sunflower after nine days of sitting in the sun, yearning for Apollo. Her feet, planted in the sand, became roots and her face turned into a flower that followed Apollo across the sky throughout the course of the day.

In Victorian times (1837-1901), the chrysanthemum flower symbolized slighted love and jealousy.



MUNSON

Elihu Vedder, *Soul of the Chrysanthemum*, after 1894, crayon, graphite, and metallic paint over a Bromide Phototype, 24 x 18 in., Gift of the American Academy of Arts and Letters 55.32

In the 1880s, Vedder created many black-and-white photographic reproductions of this image. He colored these images by hand, rubbing pigment directly onto the developed print, and offered them for sale.

Try coloring your own version of Vedder's *Soul of the Chrysanthemum*. Use your own creative color choices.



Support provided by Art Bridges