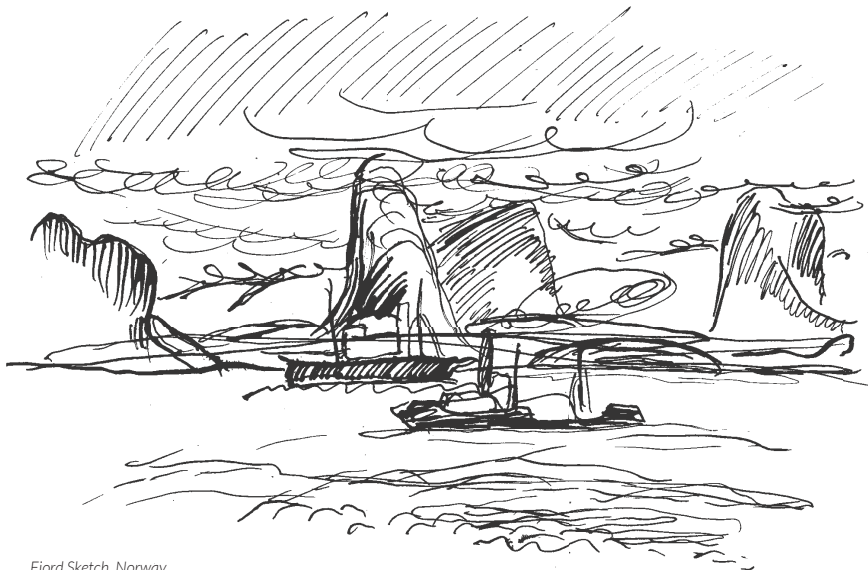


ROOTS



Fjord Sketch, Norway
William H. Johnson
Smithsonian American Art Museum

ROOTS

*An exploration of my roots.
The interconnectedness of family,
nature, and architecture.*

#629126189



ROOTS

Purpose: An exploration of my roots. The interconnectedness of family, nature, and architecture.

As a kid, I was raised to appreciate my family and where we were from. When I was eight my family moved halfway around the world but our heritage stayed with us.

As a teenager, adventure called my name. My playground was the natural world. I climbed mountains, bicycled trails, rafted in rivers and swam in every ocean.

As a young man, my calling to one day become an architect is inspired and developed through my rigorous studies and personal interests.

The intersection of these parts of my formative years is this Xplore proposal.

Roots: FAMILY

Inspirational history

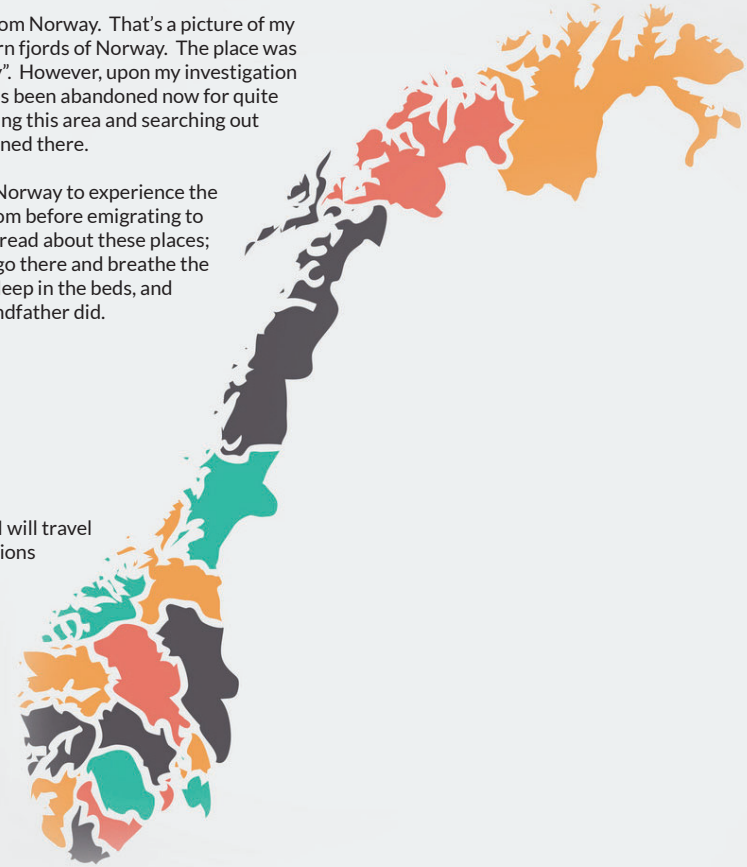
My great-great-grandfather was from Norway. That's a picture of my family's old farm in the rural western fjords of Norway. The place was called by many "the beautiful valley". However, upon my investigation it seems that the old family farm has been abandoned now for quite a while. I plan on rigorously exploring this area and searching out locals who might know what happened there.

My Xplore journey will take me to Norway to experience the old country that my family came from before emigrating to the United States. It's one thing to read about these places; it's another experience entirely to go there and breathe the air, eat the food, walk the streets, sleep in the beds, and truly live it like my great-great-grandfather did.

Cities I will visit:

- Oslo
- Bergen
- Hafslo (*near old family farm*)
- Stavanger
- Bodø

From these main launching points, I will travel by ferry, train or car to the destinations described on the following pages.



Roots: NATURE

Inspirational experiences

Nature is where I long to be. It's the place I recharge, look for inspiration, and reliably go to get away from the craziness of life.

To create balance in my life, I've always pursued activities outside the company by playing outdoors. This year has made it extremely difficult to do many outdoor activities and to create a balanced lifestyle. Simply seeing things is not enough. I desire to experience the amazing things our planet has to offer.

In addition to my family roots exploration, this Xplore journey will bring me to some of the most vivid, inspirational destinations.

Geiranger Fjord: (a UNESCO World Heritage Site): This fjord is surrounded by some of the steepest mountains on the entire west coast of Norway. It is very narrow and has no habitable shore area, for the precipitous heights rise in the sheer and rugged strata almost straight out of the water. Foaming waterfalls plunge into the fjord from jagged peaks.



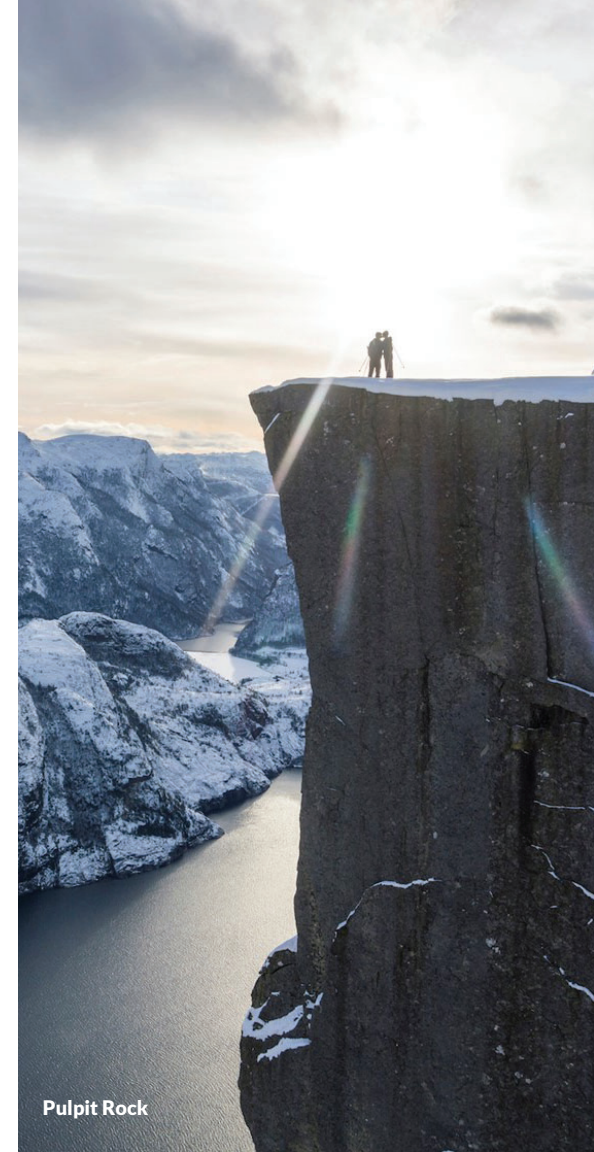
Geiranger Fjord

Ryfylke / Pulpit Rock: Visiting this popular rock formation 604 meters above the Lysefjord is a fantastic nature experience. It is listed as one of the world's most spectacular viewing platforms.

Trollstigen: Trollstigen National Tourist Route is a 106-kilometer-long stretch of road through west Norwegian nature at its most powerful, with a dizzying view of sheer mountainsides, waterfalls, deep fjords and fertile valleys.

The Trollstigen mountain road has a steep incline of 9 percent and consists of 11 hairpin bends. Encircling the road are lofty mountains. Names such as Kongen ("the King"), Dronningen ("the Queen") and Bispen ("the Bishop") confirm their majesty.

Trolltunga: Trolltunga is one of the most spectacular scenic cliffs in Norway. It is situated about 1100 meters above sea level, hovering 700 meters above Lake Ringedalsvatnet. The view is breathtaking.



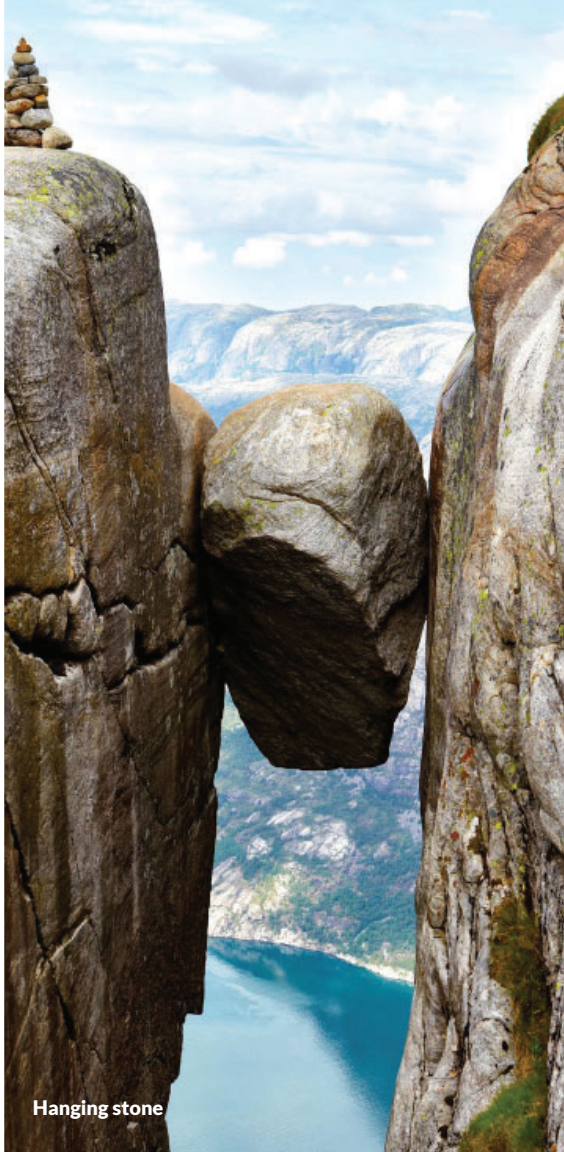
Pulpit Rock



Trollstigen



Trolltunga



Hanging stone



Lofoten Islands



Oslo Opera House

Roots: ARCHITECTURE

Inspirational design

As an aspiring architect, recharging my design batteries is just as important as recharging my adventure batteries. I've always gravitated towards the simplicity and environmental integration of Scandinavian architecture and design.

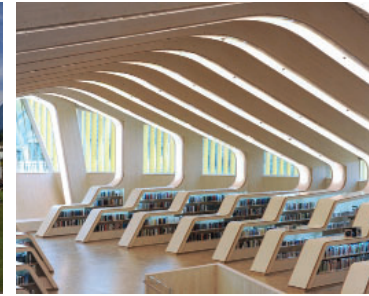
Scandinavian design represents a design philosophy that's characterized by functionality, simplicity, and clean lines. According to its design principles, one should be in harmony with his/her environment, and things should be made to last rather than be

replaced. To complement the art of living well, the design philosophy promotes a simple built environment that enhances an unencumbered lifestyle.

One of my architectural heroes, Kjetil Trædal Thorsen, founder of award-winning firm Snøhetta, is from Norway. Thorsen is renowned for his innovative designs and examples of his work is hard to come by in the US. I plan on visiting as many of his projects as I can while on my journey.



Trollstigen Visitors Center



There are many contemporary architectural projects that I am excited to visit as well. Examples include the Oslo Opera House, the Juvet, and the Trollstigen Visitor Center. These are all beautiful examples of simple, functional, environmentally integrated designs that challenge the status quo.

In addition to my family roots exploration, this Xplore journey will allow me to analyze Scandinavian architecture. While in Norway I plan on developing "patterns" that describe a problem and then offer a solution to urban and architectural design issues. In doing so I intend to give the firm and my colleagues a way integrate these "patterns" into our work and thus directly impacting how we can design better schools.



My dream is to travel to the region where my family is from, to explore the most adventurous natural environment it has to offer, and to experience the design philosophies of my architectural heroes first-hand. It is only through the generosity of Ruhnau Clarke Architect's Xplore program that I have this opportunity to embark on this ambitious trek. I can't think of a better destination where all of this comes together for me than Norway. It's the place where all of my roots interconnect: family, nature, and architecture.



Documentation

In return for RCA's generosity, and for the betterment of the company, I will share, and create an archive of my experiences using video, photography, and writing all to be published on a website so my colleagues at Ruhnau Clarke can see and experience as much of my travels as possible. The Xplore program is an amazing opportunity to help make me a more valuable contributor at Ruhnau Clarke through a wider range of experiences than I could accomplish myself.

Thank you for your consideration.