

Oslo's National Theatre. Just a few more minutes of waiting and I'll be on a bus headed for the suburbs. A statue beckons me there, to the west, inland from the fjord. In fact, you don't need to leave the center to see sculptures, as the city is filled with them. Considering that in Frognerparken alone, surrounded by a blaze of roses, there are over two hundred created by a single artist, it's a true record.

Wandering through the streets and along the waterfront, I came across monuments to playwright Henrik Ibsen, painter Edvard Munch, Max Manus, and Gunnar Sønsteby, members of the resistance against the German occupation during World War II, to name a few Norwegians.

I also noticed many portraits of women, artists like Kirsten Flagstad, an opera singer; Johanne Dybwad, a stage actress; Caroline (Bokken) Lasson, a cabaret artist and lute player; Aud Schønemann, a comedian; Wenche Foss, an actress working with people with disabilities; and Camilla Collett, a writer known in the 19th century for her work promoting women's emancipation. And among the tables of a café on Karl Johans gate, the busy central avenue, I came across one of the small bronze statues by American artist Kristen Visbal titled Fearless Girl: a fearless little girl, hands on hips and a proud gaze, created to raise awareness of gender equality and to encourage young women to become more self-aware. These are moving images, like the work near Parliament: Cecilie, the world's first sculpture of a woman who has undergone breast cancer surgery.

The statue I'm looking for today, however, is outside the city. It's dedicated to Fridtjof Nansen and is the last one I'm chasing at the end of this journey. The monuments that piqued my curiosity led me on his trail through hills, windswept islands, and incredible fjords. They were there at every stop, underscoring the special connection between that man and his surroundings. And so, with his diaries in hand, I found myself crossing the places where he lived, conceived projects and humanitarian initiatives, and observing the ports from which he set sail, driven by the desire to explore the most extreme frontiers. I breathed in the air, scanned the horizons, while his voice intertwined with my thoughts.