



# Moving Forward, Looking Back: Journeys across the Old Spanish Trail



The project explores the Spanish legacy found along the Old Spanish Trail, a route that was envisioned to link the colonial outposts of New Mexico and California.

*Moving Forward, Looking Back* is a documentary project focused on identity, based on memory and inspired by travel that combines photography, video and sound.

During 2014, Visual artist [Janire Nájera](#), travelled across the Southwest in the footsteps of merchant Antonio Armijo, who guided the first recorded expedition between New Mexico and California in 1829. During her travels in Orwell, a 1984 RV that became her home and modern day mule, she interviewed many Spanish descendants exploring how the traditions of the first settlers have merged with domestic cultures and have influenced the creation and identity of today's pueblos and modern cities. Orwell acted as a portable studio and as a meeting place from which she engaged with the descendants that Nájera encountered along the way. She took their portrait and recorded their oral histories to reveal traces of the intangible heritage that remains across these states.

In May 2015 the first exhibition of the project opened in Washington, D.C. and a book about this journey was presented. Approximately 1200 miles long, [The Old Spanish Trail](#) was an arduous pack mule trail that flourished in the 19th century allowing early merchants from both regions to engage in trade within a vast and imposing environment. Landscapes have evolved from the times when blankets and quilts were exchanged for mules and horses, and the perceived distances have substantially shortened since the original caravans, which traveled around 15 miles a day, have been replaced with the speed of modern transportation.

HERITAGE  
LOS ANGELES

Wed, February 01–  
Sun, June 25, 2017

## Venue

Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866

[View map](#)

## Admission

Free

## More information

[Moving Forward, Looking Back](#)

## Credits

Presented by Chapman University, Wales Arts International and SPAIN arts & culture.



## JANIRE NÁJERA

Janire is a photojournalist based in Cardiff (UK) who works in creative projects internationally. She studied Journalism in Madrid and Documentary Photography at the University of Wales, Newport. Her documentary practice is concerned with highlighting communities around the globe, which have been displaced through changing social and economic climates. Through her work she hopes to re-think and develop imagery that questions the histories and environments we belong to.

One of her interests is the documentation of human traces in spaces in transition exploring how time can alter our perspective and understanding towards certain issues. For the last five years Janire has curated the multidisciplinary art project *Ghosts in Armour*, an artistic exploration into the declining of an industry that has shaped parallel cultures across Europe.

Opening reception and book signing on Thursday, February 9th.