



**CENTRAL MARKET**

HARI HO

# CENTRAL MARKET

Kuala Lumpur

The traditional wet market that was Central Market, Kuala Lumpur closed in 1985 and the traders relocated to other markets in the outer suburbs of the city. These portraits are of the traders and other people who worked in the Market, some of whom had been there for generations.

Although the portraits are situated within a particular milieu, my main aim was to portray the humanity of each subject, cutting across arbitrary divisions of race, class and wealth.

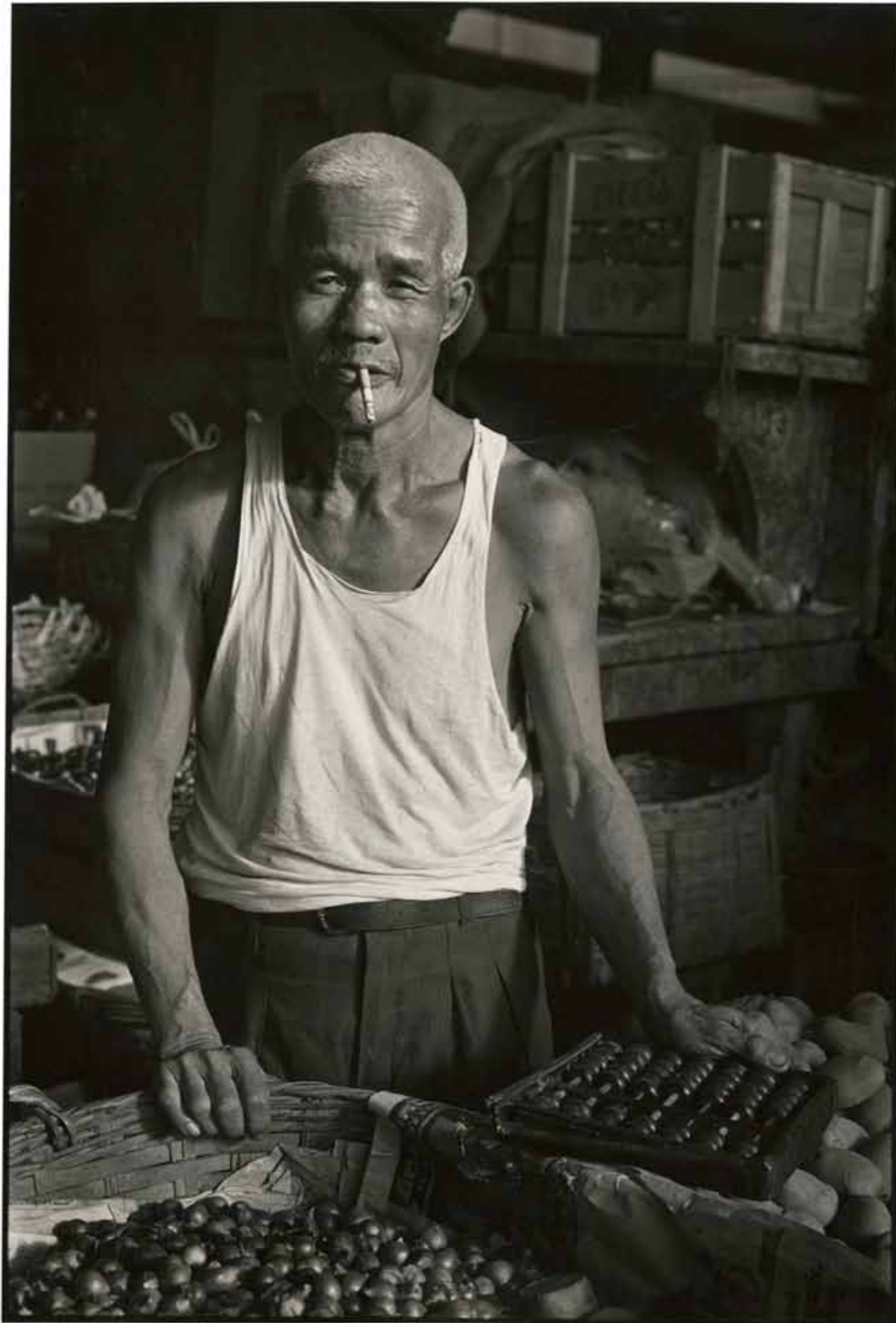
I went to the Market daily in its final weeks often from before dawn when the hustle and bustle began. Much of what I did initially was getting to know some of the people there and making them feel comfortable with my presence and what I was doing. Making the portraits in this way felt more like a collaborative process.

I wanted the significance of the portraits to be about the subject, their presence, and their individual sense of themselves without any overt imposition or interpretation by me as the photographer. An unassuming frontal orientation seemed the best way to give a classical stillness to their portraits. It was the neutral gaze that I wanted from them.

My attempt to elicit this sense of the subjects' felt identity and to have them project this to my camera was essentially a process of reduction. I worked to have less of the extraneous and more in revealing the depth of the subject. Although I started with colour film I soon abandoned it and turned to black & white. Colour was too distracting, pulling the eye away from the essence of the subject. Monochromes imbued the portraits with the depth and quietude that was appropriate for what I wanted.

The subjects had a palpable sense of occasion with the imminent closure of the Market. This gave the portraits a feeling of formality that was balanced by the casual nature of the subjects being photographed within their own environment by someone they had become familiar with. I looked for ease of gestural expression in how the subjects sat or stood with their hands, arms and legs positioned with the least self-consciousness. Some delighted me with spontaneous gestures: Wong Chee Mun an eccentric collector of military paraphernalia snapped to attention and saluted, while Wong Yen Hoon who fed all the stray cats in the Market, waved his hand as if in benediction, telling me afterwards that for this portrait he would like to "greet the world".

Hari Ho  
2017



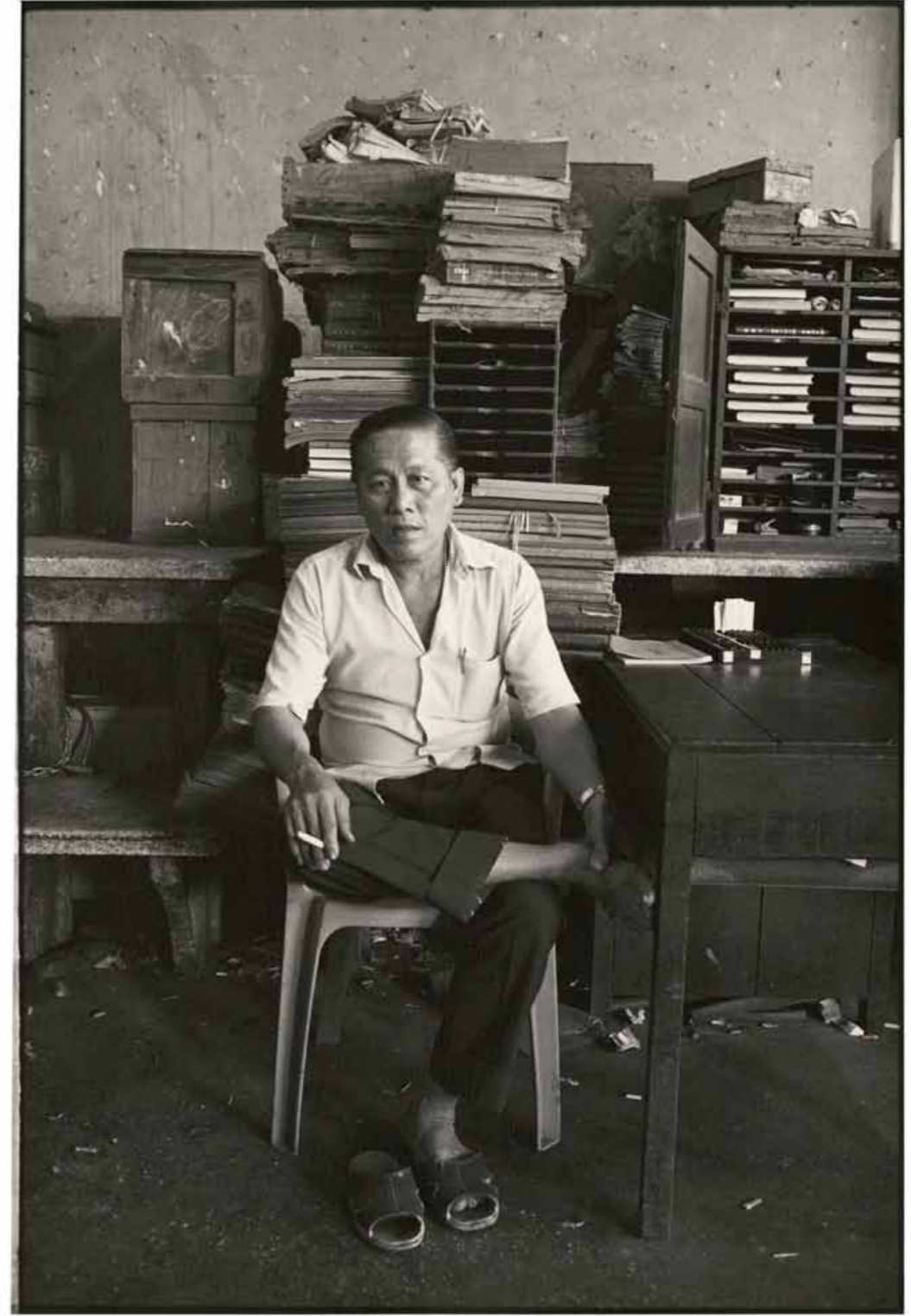
*'Yap Hoh Hong'*



*'Wong Keng Choon'*



*'Chuah Chin'*



*'Low Weng Kee'*



*'Choong Yin Men, workers'*



*'Lee Meow Tow, Loong Kok Hing'*



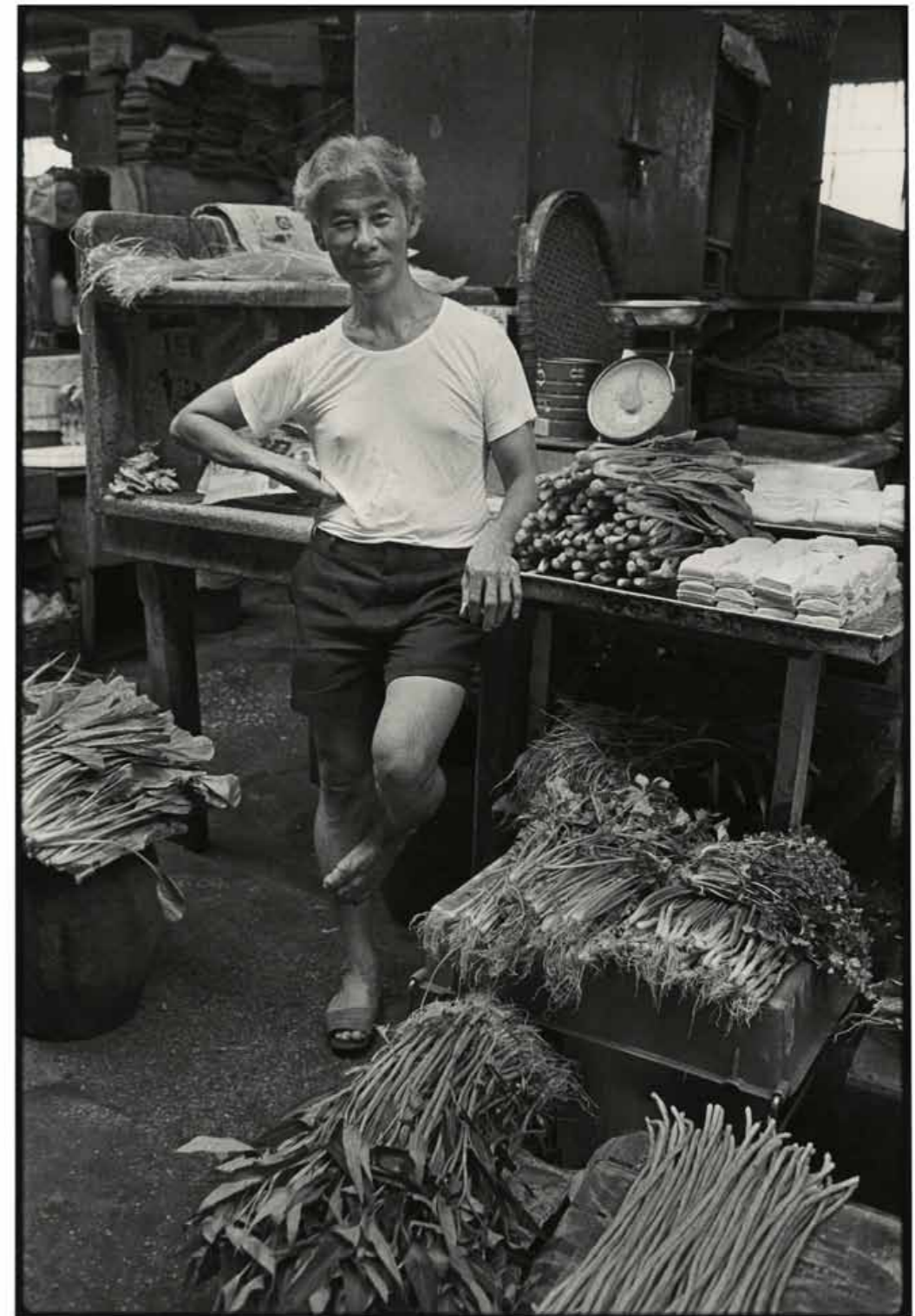
*'Mah Kum Lin'*



*'Koo Wai Yuan, Koo Wai Keong'*



*'Subramaniam, workers*



*'Wong Won'*

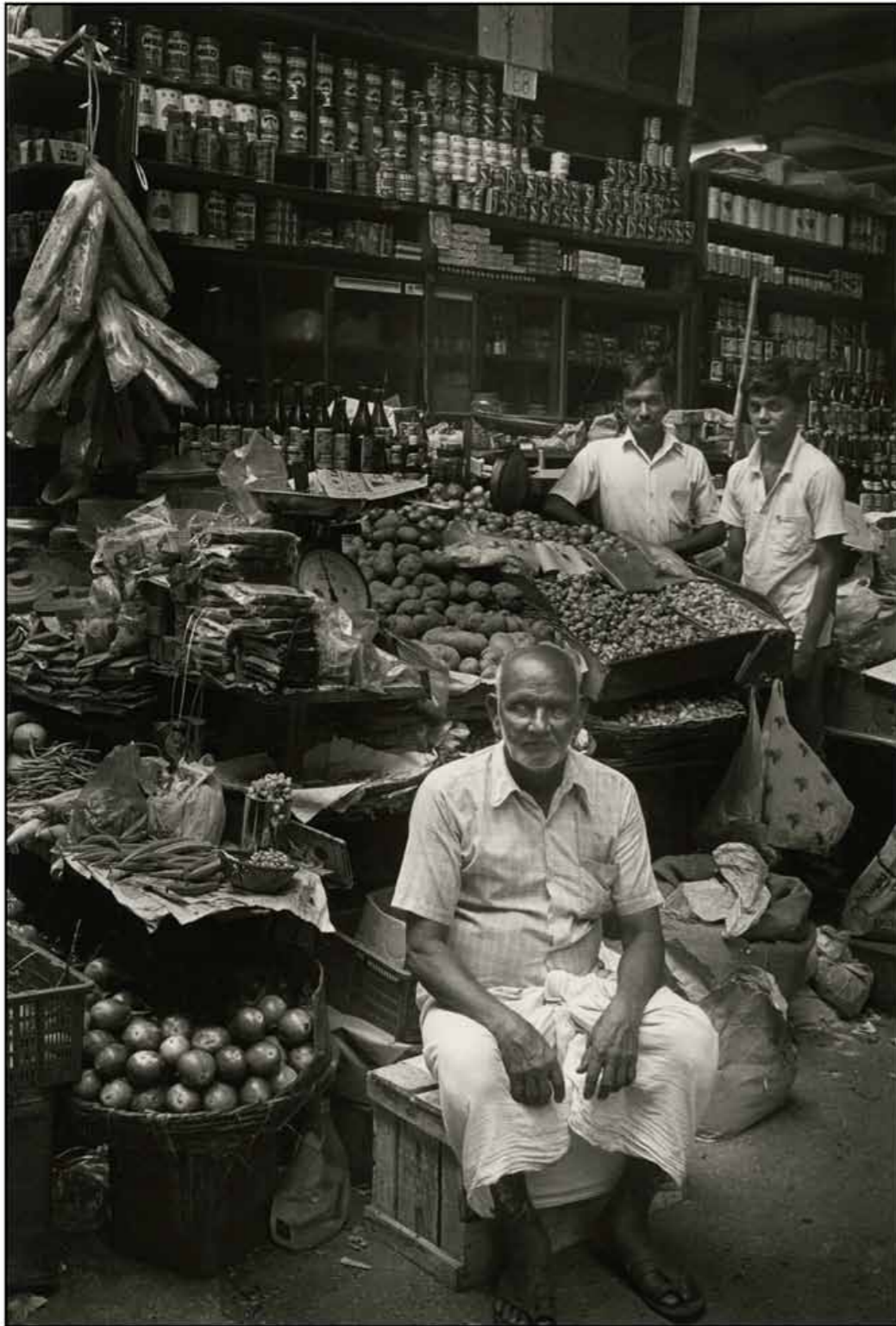


*'Timah, Samsudin, Rahim, Tijah'*



*'Soo Gek, See Chong Hin'*

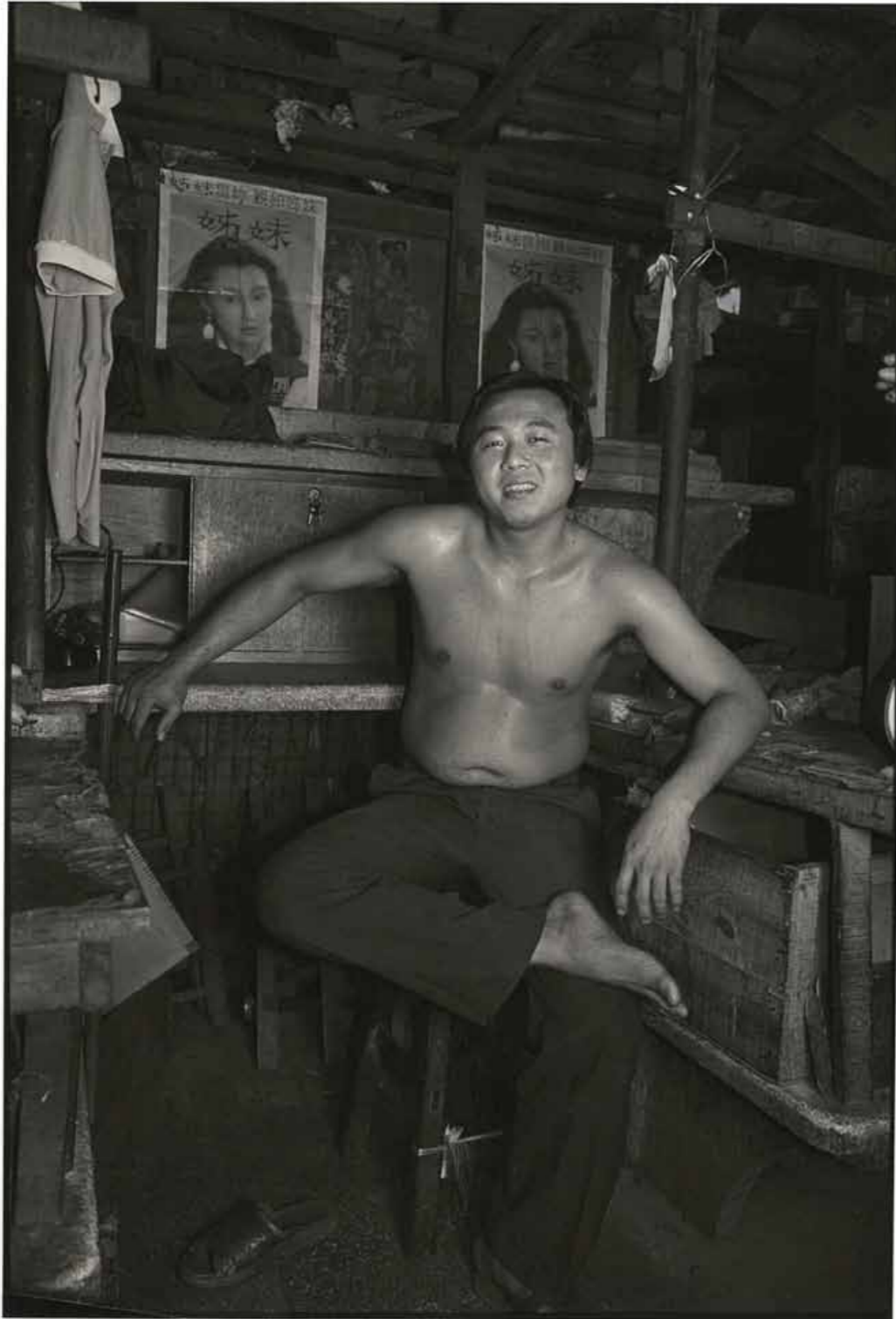




*'Subramaniam, Murugam, Abdul Kadir'*



*'Cheong Yew, Khor Leong Wah'*



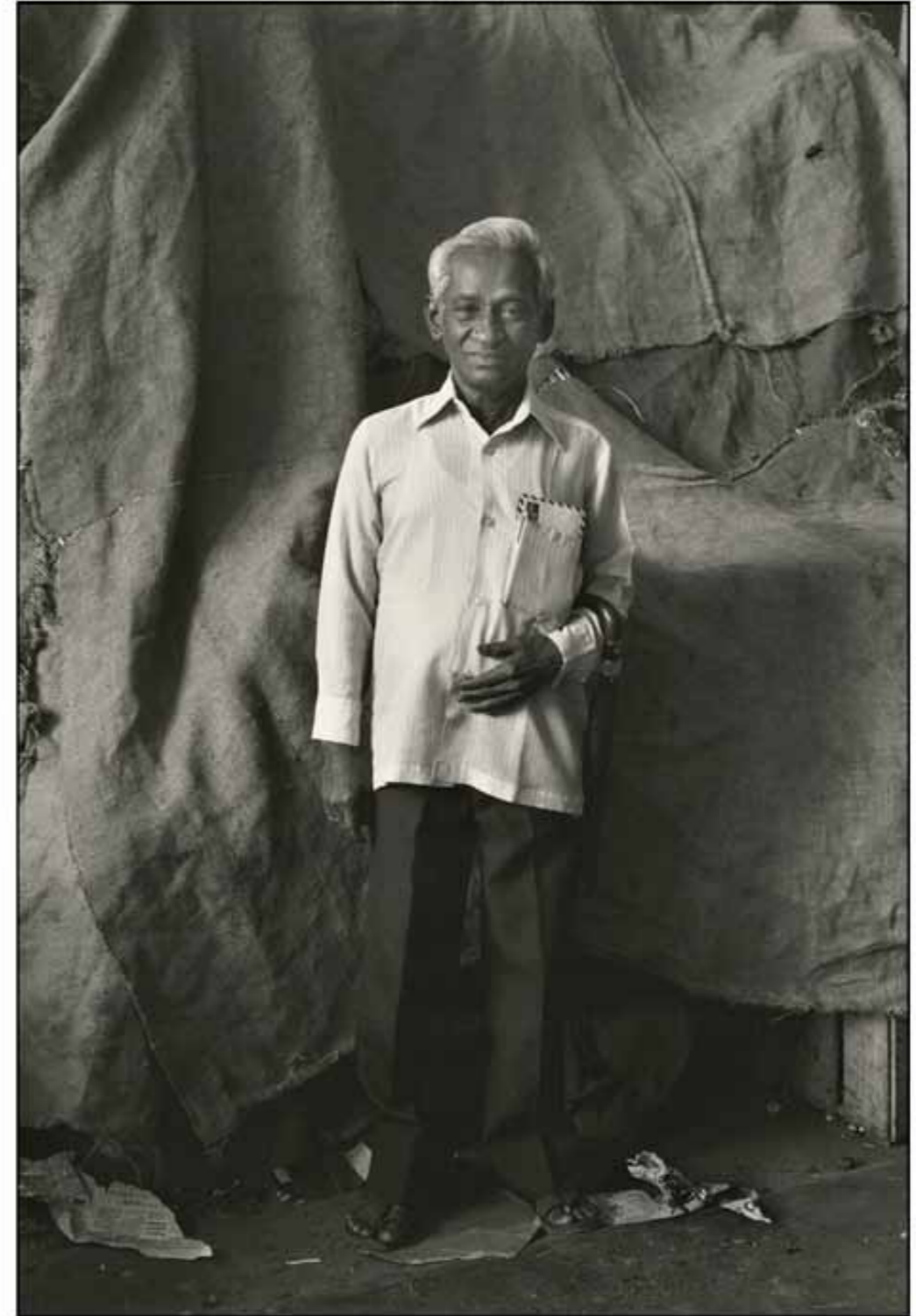
*'Chan Chean Choon'*



*'Tan Eng Huah'*



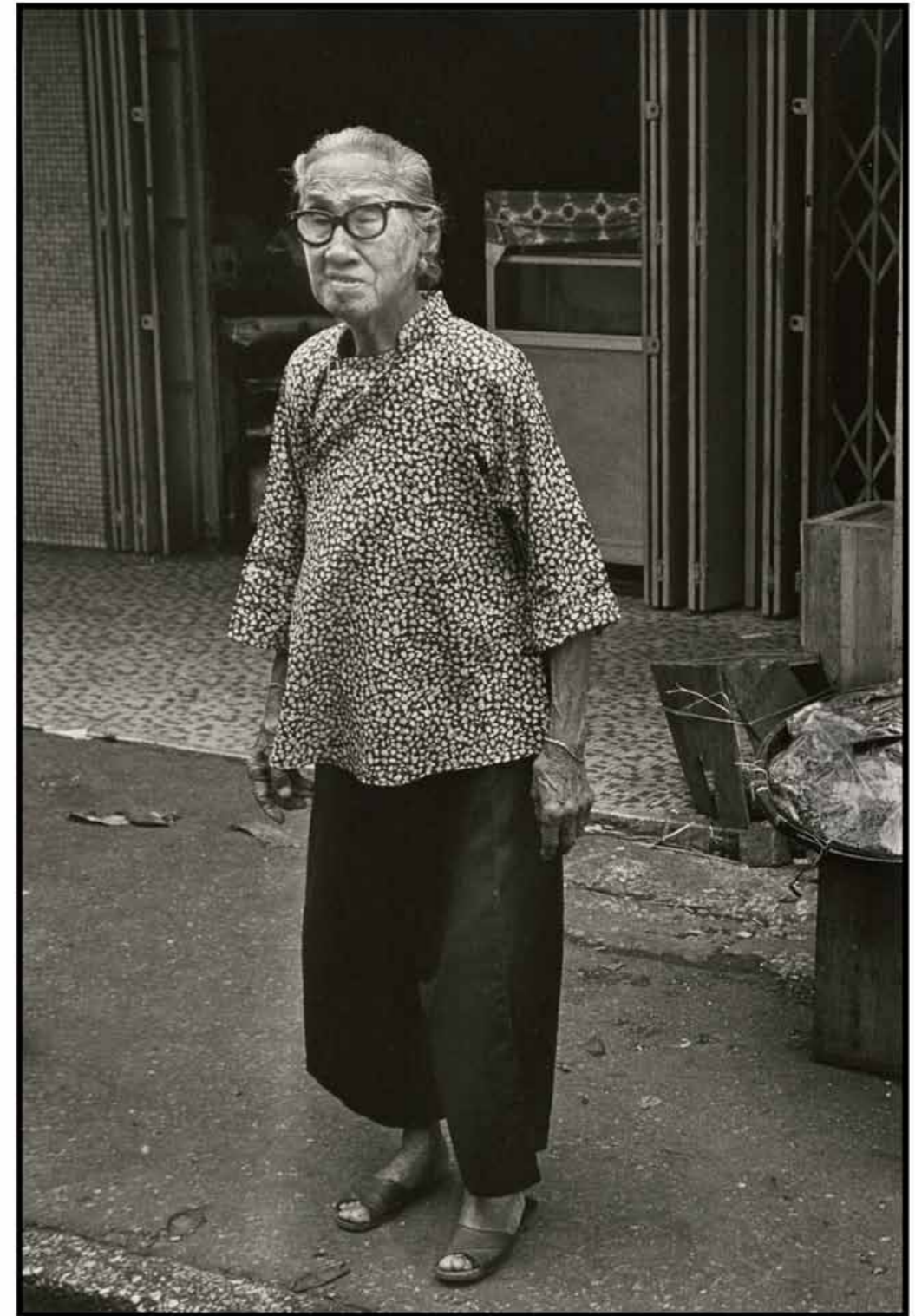
*'Chicken processors'*



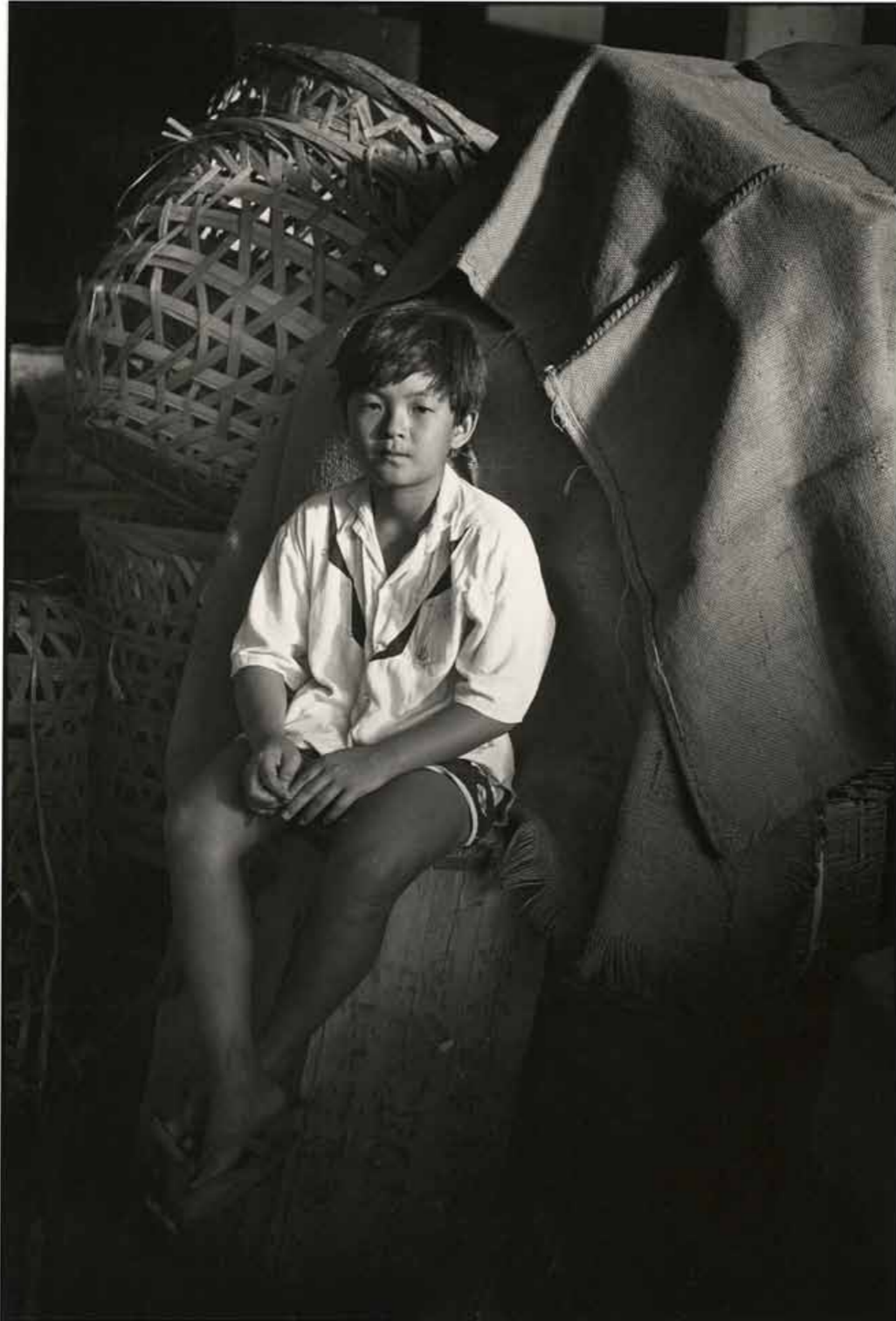
*'Visvanathan'*



*'Low Lai Ying'*



*'Chong Poh Eng'*



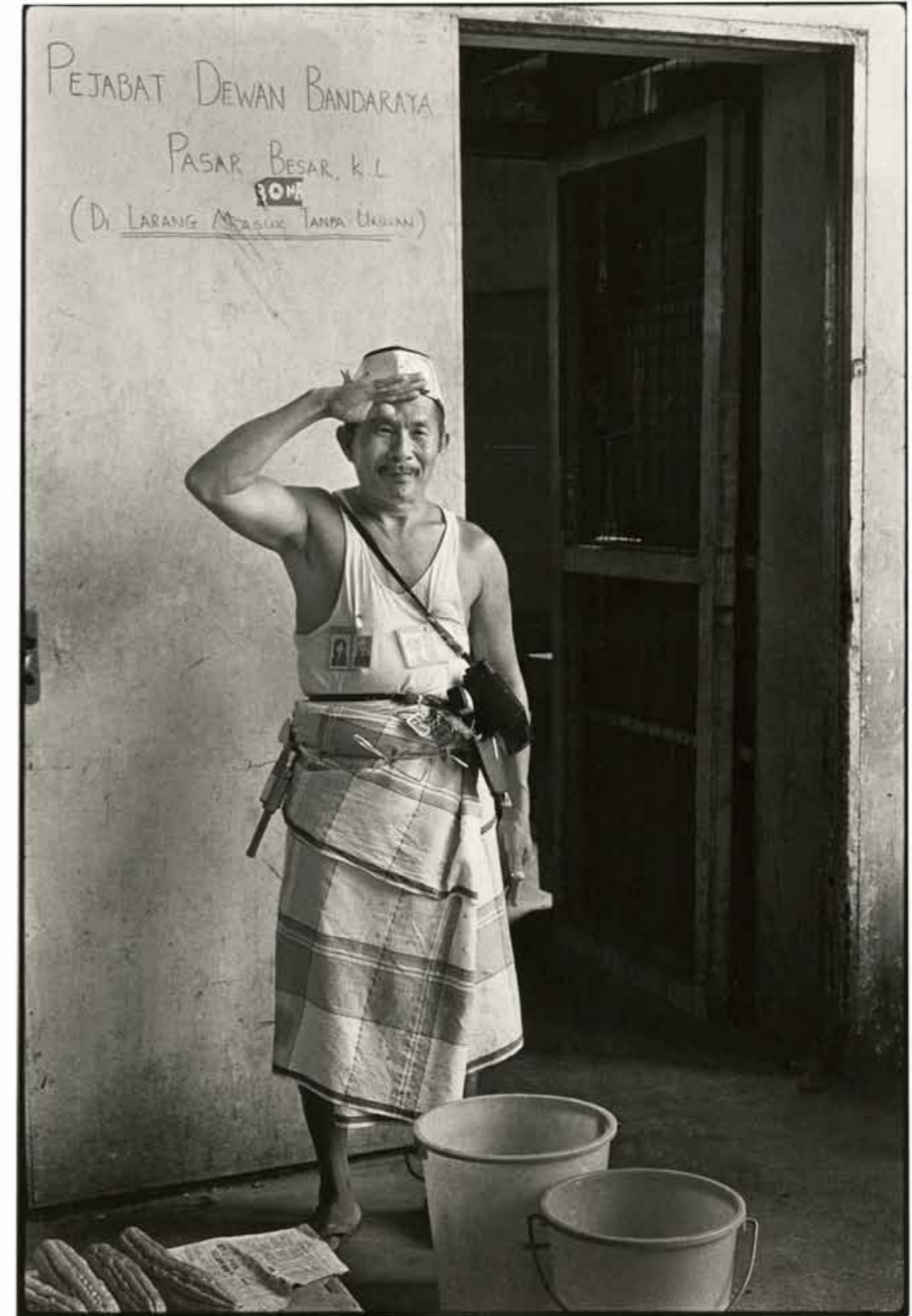
*'Lorry boy'*



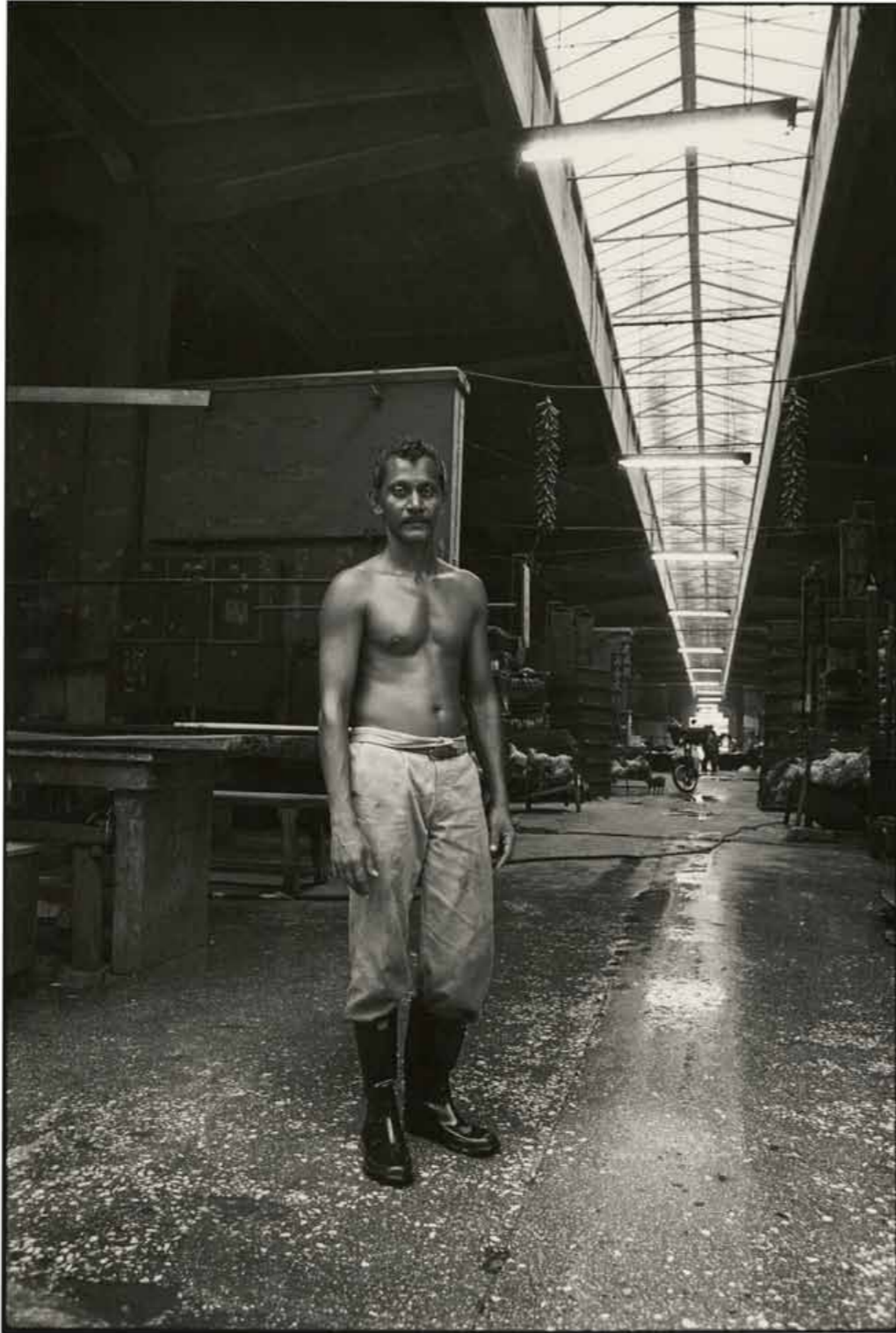
*'Phoon Chien, Loke Woon'*



*'Vengittasu Asaraya, Subbramah Somolu'*



*'Wong Chee Mun'*



*'A. Ramasamy'*



*'Lai Kok Chin'*



*'Wong Yen Hoon'*



*'The day after'*



Hari Ho is a photographer, born 1948 in Ipoh, Malaysia, and currently based in Newcastle, Australia.

#### **Solo Exhibitions**

'Central Market', Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
'Portraits', Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Australia  
'Secret Light', Metro 5 Gallery, Melbourne, Australia  
'Desert', Salt Gallery, Queenscliff, Victoria, Australia  
'Common Variety', Rupa Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

#### **Group Exhibitions**

'Not Fair, 2014', Melbourne  
'BaTashchit: Thou shalt not destroy', Jewish Museum, Melbourne, Australia  
'Culture Trackers', 24HR Art, Darwin  
'Citibank Photographic Portraiture Award Finalists', Art Gallery NSW  
'Olive Cotton Photographic Portraiture Award Finalists', Tweed River Art Gallery  
'Festivus', Sherman Galleries  
'Depth of Field', National Portrait Gallery, Canberra  
'Portraits', Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
'William Creek & Beyond', Melbourne Museum, Melbourne and American Express Hall, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney  
'Straight Takes', Badan Warisan, Kuala Lumpur and Galeri Adiwarna, Universiti Sains, Penang  
'Confluence', National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
'Exclusion', Chobi Mela International Photography Symposium, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
'City', Bandar Raya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

#### **Collections**

Australian National Portrait Gallery, Canberra  
Gene & Brian Sherman Collection, Sydney  
Jason Yeap Collection, Melbourne  
Private collections in Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the US

Hari Ho has worked on art projects in Cambodia, Egypt, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Turkey, as well as in the central Australian desert and Arnhem Land in Australia.

He was awarded the Howard Arkley Award 2014, adjudicated by Doug Hall, former Director of Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane and the founder of the Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane.

#### **Publications**

William Creek & Beyond, Craftsman House  
Unfinished Journey, Macmillan  
Twenty: Sherman Galleries, Craftsman House  
Roar Re-Viewed, Macmillan

### **Acknowledgement**

The project began as social commentary with Victor Chin but during the process – and with Victor’s gracious generosity, for which I thank him – became one of photographic portraiture for me.



All photographs  
(Archival pigment on cotton rag, 50cm x 39cm)



**Wei-Ling Gallery**

To accompany Hari Ho’s ‘CENTRAL MARKET’ from 2 August - 10 September 2017 at Wei-Ling Gallery.

#### **Wei-Ling Gallery**

No. 8 Jalan Scott, Brickfields  
50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
T: +603 2260 1106 F: +603 2260 1107  
E: [weilinggallery@gmail.com](mailto:weilinggallery@gmail.com)  
W: [www.weiling-gallery.com](http://www.weiling-gallery.com)

#### **Wei-Ling Contemporary**

Lot No RT-1, 6th Floor  
The Gardens Mall, Lingkaran Syed Putra  
59200, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
T: +603 2282 8323  
E: [weilingcontemporary@gmail.com](mailto:weilingcontemporary@gmail.com)

