

Bas Timmer is changing the world one Sheltersuit at a time

Design Indaba speaker, Dutch fashion designer Bas Timmer had been working on a winter clothing range when he heard that a friend of his father, who had been rendered homeless, had died of hypothermia while waiting for a shelter to open. Distressed, Timmer vowed to come up with a solution to protect the homeless from extreme cold, and the Sheltersuit was born.



Bas Timmer with someone wearing his Sheltersuit. Image supplied.

With homeless people testing the prototype of the Sheltersuit, Timmer, a ArtEZ Institute of the Arts graduate, made sure it could accommodate the real needs of those trying to survive on the street. Created from upcycled and recycled materials, the durable Sheltersuit is in effect a waterproof and windproof bodysuit with an easily attachable sleeping bag. If the wearer needs to move away from a particular location quickly, there's an opening at the bottom of the suit to facilitate this. The ingeniously designed garment can be stored in a matching backpack during the day.

Sheltersuit Foundation

In 2014, Timmer founded the Sheltersuit Foundation to extend and scale the project. Sheltersuit products are made by volunteers, formerly homeless people, refugees or the unemployed (some of the workers receive payment). Members of vulnerable communities receive further support in the form of food, job coaching, or cultural integration into Dutch society in the case of refugees, giving them greater hope for the future.

Meanwhile, Timmer is on a mission to share his Sheltersuits far and wide. In 2017, he partnered with Dutch actor and presenter Johnny de Mol and his Movement on the Ground, as well as the WakaWaka Foundation, to provide 1,500 Sheltersuits and compact solar-powered WakaWaka flashlights to refugees at camps in Lesbos, Greece. In 2018, 650 Sheltersuits were handed out to refugees in Sarajevo.

The Sheltersuit is not merely a solution for the homeless, it is an extremely well designed one at that. In 2017, it received the Public Choice Award at Dutch Design Week, and in 2018, a German Design Award from the German Design Council. After a recent trip to the United States, Timmer began working on a warmer-weather suit – the Shelterbag – which can protect someone from the rain without overheating them.

On the strength of seed funding received from Design Indaba, Timmer will be launching Sheltersuit SA at #DI2020 – so join us to be part of this growing philanthropic movement!

Tickets for the Design Indaba 2020 are available [here](#).

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