

ENTRE NOUS

# EMMANUELLE

Have coffee with  
an icon of the French cinema.

# BEART

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**N:** The great French film director Claude Sautet (who also directed you in the films "Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud" and "A Heart in Winter") said that professional actors are "98% concentration and 2% talent". Do you recognize yourself in this statement?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** Yes, I do think that acting is not an innate gift. On the contrary, it requires hard work. When I started 18 years ago, I wasn't under the impression that I had something the others didn't have... just the opposite actually. Back then I just went with the flow. And then this job became a choice and I went to "work", notably by going onto the stage and working with directors who were very demanding. True freedom comes mainly through discipline. Through precision – because nothing falls into your lap. Experience just allows you to take greater pleasure in it.

**N:** For nearly 20 years now you have been a part of the cinema landscape in France. You have never confined yourself to a particular genre. Which kind of cinema do you identify with most?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** I mainly identify with the idea of travelling, discovering other people. From the start I have been fascinated by the idea of blending in with a universe that isn't mine. In France, "auteur cinéma" – produced in a state of emergency and with limited budgets – is a cinema "in danger". We have to protect it because it is now a minority and is having a hard time attracting the younger audiences. I support it – for it is the cinema that shaped me as an actress. When I think back on the filmmakers I grew up with and who helped develop my career, I think of André Téchiné, Jacques Rivette and Claude Sautet. These are the ones who kept French cinema from selling its soul to the devil.



Born on August 14, 1963, the daughter of singer and poet Guy Béart and actress Geneviève Galéa grew up on a farm on the French Riviera, far from the glitz of Paris. (Emmanuelle wears an Ice Cube necklace by Chopard. Top by Giambattista Valli; shoes by Catherine Malandrino)

The award-winning screen, television and stage actress, model, and mother of two may be seen in her newest film productions, "The Witnesses", a historical drama directed by André Téchiné (2007), and new this year, the comedy "Disco" and the environmental thriller "Vinyan". (chiffon top by Toga; dress by Dior)



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**N:** Taking a break from the auteur cinema of France, you did try a taste of Hollywood in 1996 with “Mission: Impossible” by Brian de Palma. You never renewed the experience... Did this reinforce your attachment to France?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** “Mission: Impossible” was, for me, a playful experience. In addition to the cinematographic world, I discovered another planet into which I could integrate myself without having necessarily aspired to do so in my life as a woman and actress. One thing is certain – it did not reinforce my French identity. Even though I grew up in France, I have too much mixed blood – Greek, Maltese, Croatian, Russian, Spanish, Italian – to feel that kind of belonging. There are many other countries that give me the impression of being home without really knowing why.

**N:** Which countries outside of France attract you the most?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** The African continent, where I went frequently as a UNICEF ambassador to help children in need. It makes me begin to believe in previous lives – that’s how alive I feel when I’m there. Over there you find a dignity, wisdom – in horrible misery. We often talk about what we can do to change those countries, but we forget to ask how they might change us, on the ethical and spiritual level. I also have a great deal of affinity for Eastern European countries, where I identify very much with the music, the dance. Not to mention the Mediterranean countries... I wouldn’t like to sound ordinary but I do see myself as a real “citizen of the world”!

**N:** Would you say, then, that your humanitarian efforts, for example with UNICEF, have altered your perception of tourism?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** Yes, fundamentally. After 10 years, I am still sensitized to signs of distress, malnutrition, or health problems in general. It’s difficult for me to return to these countries with the naive perspective of a tourist. For example: I could never again go on a safari in Kenya, it would feel like going to the zoo.

**N:** The environment is also an issue close to your heart. What do you do on a daily basis to help the planet?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** For many, water and electricity are non-existent, while for us they are a self-evident privilege. I can’t stand to be

wasteful, and try to reduce my consumption to a minimum. I have a country house in Belgium where discipline reigns with trash separation for recycling. I also apply this discipline to my household in Paris, where I have several trash bins. I teach these small steps to my children to encourage their awareness of environmental issues. Citizens need to become more responsible: we definitely can’t change everyone’s nature – but their habits, yes we can.

**N:** Are you more of a city girl or a country girl?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** From my childhood (Editor’s note: Emmanuelle was raised in the south of France, near Saint Tropez) I have retained a need for nature in order to restore my energy. I am not a “city girl” and will never be one. This is without a doubt why I fell in love with the house in Belgium, planted amidst the fields. There I can walk barefoot, garden, plant trees, do some gardening... it’s my rural side. In Paris I think I’ve been able to reproduce this rustic lifestyle. My house is entirely decorated with flea market items found on my travels. It’s a place that is both protected and open to all those looking for good conversation, a place to sit, drink a coffee, stay for dinner... I can’t cook but I am a fabulous host!

**N:** If you don’t cook, what do you like to eat?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** You are what you eat, I deeply believe in this. I was raised macrobiotic and this philosophy never left me. I only consume fruits and vegetables that are in season and I drink enormous quantities of green tea. On the other hand, my diet contains absolutely no meat, sugar, pills or alcohol... except for very good bottles of wine. My grandmother, who is 103 years old and lives with me, is a magnificent example of the benefits of a macrobiotic lifestyle!

**N:** What is your idea of total relaxation?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** My morning coffee! I like to wake up very early so that I can feel like I haven’t wasted my day. It’s a very intimate moment, alone in my kitchen, where I give in to the ritual of the “short black”. I’m so addicted to my Nespresso machine that I gave every person in my family one in a different colour for Christmas!

**N:** What is definitely not your cup of coffee?

**Emmanuelle Béart:** Snobism and racism. Those are the two things I just cannot accept. ☹️