KINONIK

MON ONCLE (1958)

Directed by Jacques Tati

WEDNESDAY May 6th 7PM

SATURDAY May 9th 2PM / 7PM



Before Mr. Bean approached the world with his singular and nasty confidence, M. Hulot wandered as a freshly embodied mind dropped into human form: no manual, no training, no prior agreement with his environment about how things are supposed to work. In some ways, he’s an alien. But we know he’s not an alien because he has a sister — and she’s married into the wealthy Arpel family.

The Arpels want you to believe that they have solved living through plastics. Their house is designed for a universal user born pre-loaded with every YouTube tutorial in existence. It rejects tradition, common sense, and reality itself. They’ll have you know that it is very, very expensive. But nothing in it works, and the fountain only runs for guests they want to impress.

Hulot, however, can't be impressed. He approaches every object as if for the first time and the house breaks around him not because he's clumsy but because the system can't accommodate a consciousness that hasn't accepted the end-user license agreement. He's the one figure who can't be optimized, which means he's the one figure who can't be captured. His nephew is delighted by his failure.

Tati films all of this with the detachment of an entomologist. But there’s a warmth to his disinterest, a distinct bias toward the gentle decay of the old quarter, the dogs running their morning circuit, the boys punking on strangers. He shows us the gap between a world designed for a theoretical body and an actual body that arrived without instructions — and how much was on the side of the body, before we paved it over.

Without **Mon Oncle** we wouldn’t have Jackass. And that would suck.