

The Museum of Modern Art

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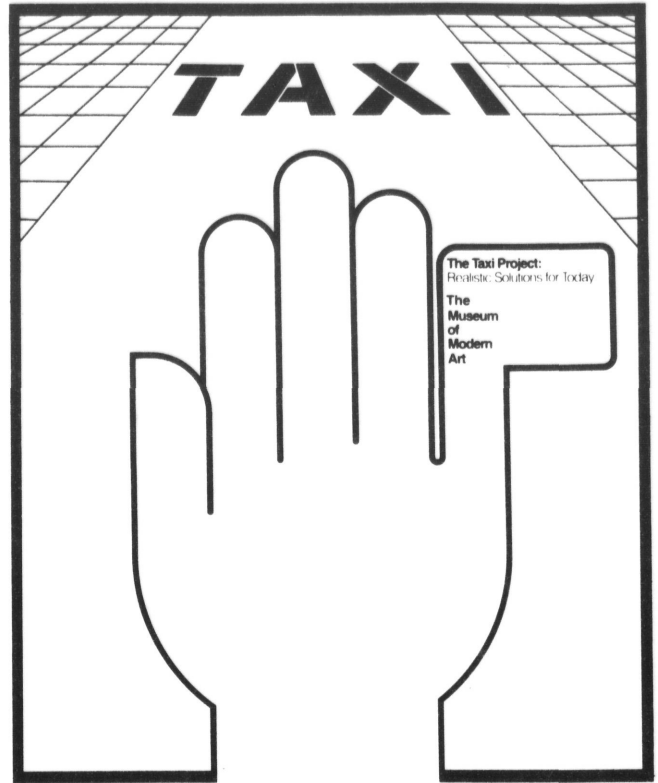
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THE TAXI PROJECT:
REALISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY
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Directed by Emilio Ambasz, Curator of Design
The Museum of Modern Art

VOLVO TAXI PROTOTYPE



Volvo has been concerned with its responsibilities toward the environment and the problems of city traffic since the 1972 Environmental Conference in Stockholm. "The solution to these problems," Volvo believes, "is not to be found in a war against the motor car, but in a comprehensive understanding of the car's benefits."

The Volvo Experimental Taxi Vehicle is not to be viewed necessarily as a prototype ready for production, but as a conception, a basis for future development in taxi services. Versatility and diversification in use combined with high levels of comfort and safety were the guiding factors behind the design.

The Volvo taxi is spacious but compact (shorter than the type of taxi common in New York City). Very short front and rear overhangs mean good vision and a tight turning circle. The body is built according to the Volvo "safety cage principle": heavy closed profile members surround the entire occupant area, while the front and rear sections are energy absorbing crumple zones. The doors and flanks of the vehicle incorporate built in protection in the form of tubular steel members, and the floor is reinforced by five strong cross members. Both the front and rear bumper are impact-absorbing and comply with the five mph crash impact requirement

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by a wide margin. A heavy-duty rubber moulding runs along the flanks of the vehicle at a strategic height in order to reduce the often slight yet expensive damage which is not unusual in city traffic.

The right-hand sliding door of the passenger compartment is electrically operated by the driver, who has lock-control over all the vehicle's doors. Warning lights indicate if any are not completely locked. The opening of the right-hand door is extra wide for ease of entry and exit.

A rear seat for two has a center armrest which can be folded up for a third occupant. The right-hand section of the seat also folds up to provide space for a wheelchair passenger, with room for an accompanying passenger on the left side of the seat. Comfort is guaranteed by anatomically correct seat design, plus high sitting height and generous leg room.

In lieu of safety belts Volvo has developed a safety bar which the passenger pulls down. In its lowered position the bar can be adjusted to suit the passenger's height. Anchored to the vehicle's body, the safety bar provides excellent protection from front and sides, and due to its padding, a convenient armrest.

Luggage is stored on the right side of the passenger area in front of the rear seat. The same space can also be used for an extra passenger with its folding seat facing rearward.

The driver's area, separated from the passenger's by a partition of bullet-proof glass and armored steel, is specifically designed for long, arduous working shifts under the worst of city traffic conditions. The seating and space are comfortable for drivers of every shape and size.

The driving seat has a built-in head restraint and a three-point inertia reel seat belt. An extra-large windshield offers good visibility. Other features in the driver's compartment include a writing table with reading lamp, safe box and refrigerator.

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Although the Volvo Experimental Taxi Vehicle is intended for three to four passengers, it can easily be built as a mini-bus for nine occupants plus a driver, with three bench rows; or could be adapted for use as an ambulance, large station wagon, or van.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, or Linda Gordon, Associate Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7501; 2648.