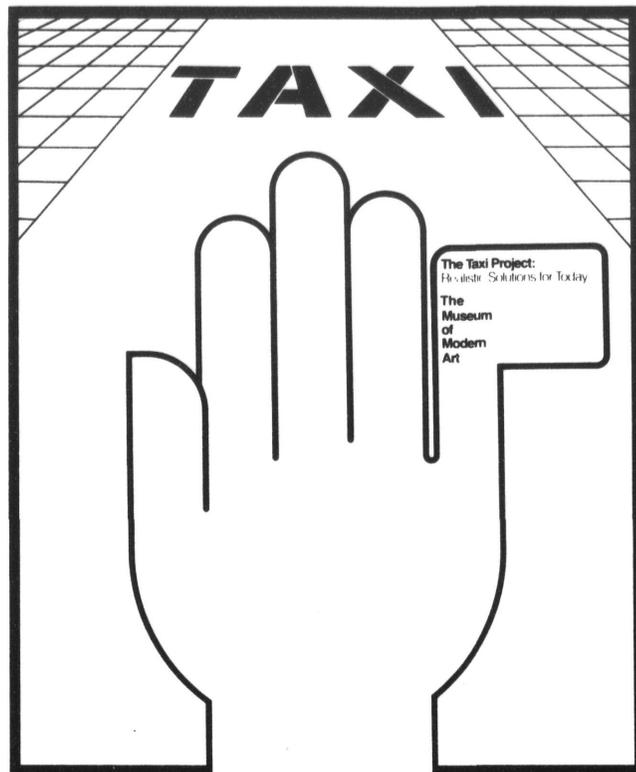


"Taxis are the unsung heroes of urban transportation. Their industry is an important part of the national transit system, and a key factor in inter-urban movement. In the United States, approximately 170,000 vehicles serve 2.5 billion passengers yearly, and are the only form of public transportation available to more than 3,400 communities in the United States. The taxi prototypes which are the outcome of the Museum's Taxi Project are practical and realistic solutions that industry can produce at reasonable prices and that can be operated economically. The taxis, specially designed for meeting urban traffic conditions, might considerably improve the quality of life in the urban environment, for they would use less energy, reduce air pollution, and cut traffic congestion, as well as provide safe and comfortable accommodations for passengers and luggage. It is hoped that The Taxi Project will promote the manufacture and introduction of a more suitable taxicab vehicle before the end of this decade."

-- Emilio Ambasz



THE TAXI PROJECT: REALISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY, by Emilio Ambasz, with accompanying essays by G. N. Georgano, Martin Wohl and Brian Richards, statements by the five engineering and design teams of the participating manufacturers who have produced prototypes for The Taxi Project.

176 pages; 236 illustrations (12 in color). \$12.00

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THE TAXI PROJECT: REALISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY, by Emilio Ambasz, with accompanying essays by G. N. Georgano, Martin Wohl and Brian Richards, will be published in June by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with The Taxi Project exhibition, which was conceived and directed by Mr. Ambasz. The 176-page volume includes statements written by each of the five engineering and design teams of the participating manufacturers who have produced prototypes for the exhibition. The exhibition itself has been made possible by grants from Mobil Oil Corporation and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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The introductory essay by Emilio Ambasz defines the project's objectives. In the historical and critical section of the publication, a richly illustrated historical survey of the taxi has been provided by G. N. Georgano. Brian Richards has explored several crucial eventualities of the taxi's future, and Martin Wohl has contributed a summary of the taxi's present role in urban transportation.

The Taxi Project is a response to the need for developing alternatives to conventional transit and the private automobile. Its specific purpose is to encourage the production of a reasonably priced taxi vehicle which would better serve the needs of the passengers, the drivers, and the taxi industry. In addition, the project explores the vital services which jitneys, taxis, dial-a-rides, and subscription taxi programs can render to the community in terms of economy, energy conservation, efficiency and convenience.

At the Museum's invitation, two American and two European car manufacturers produced new working prototypes of taxicabs, based on specifications developed by the Museum and the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. The American manufacturers, American Machine and Foundry, and Steam Power Systems, both of California, worked under a contract from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The European companies are Volvo and Volkswagen. A third European company, Alfa Romeo, adopted the Museum's Design Specifications for developing -- on its own -- a taxi for the European market. The Alfa Romeo prototype is also being exhibited in The Taxi Project, hors concours.

The Museum's Design Specifications stressed a pragmatic approach to design. The immediate goal was to create cabs which are economical to operate and maintain; comfortable and safe, and aimed to reduce both pollution and traffic congestion. The Museum's long range goal was to demonstrate that

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if taxicabs and jitney services were assigned a more important role in urban transit, considerable improvement could be brought about by a comparatively small investment. The impact of such changes would be visible in a short time, and have positive effects throughout the city structure. It would not involve heavy investments in equipment and material, or urban expropriations for motorways and rights of way, with all the concomitant aspects of social disruption common to highway construction in urban areas. An improved and expanded range of taxi services would, moreover, provide a wider set of transit choices. It is clearly the most immediate and economical move which can be taken to improve public transportation in our cities and suburbs.

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