

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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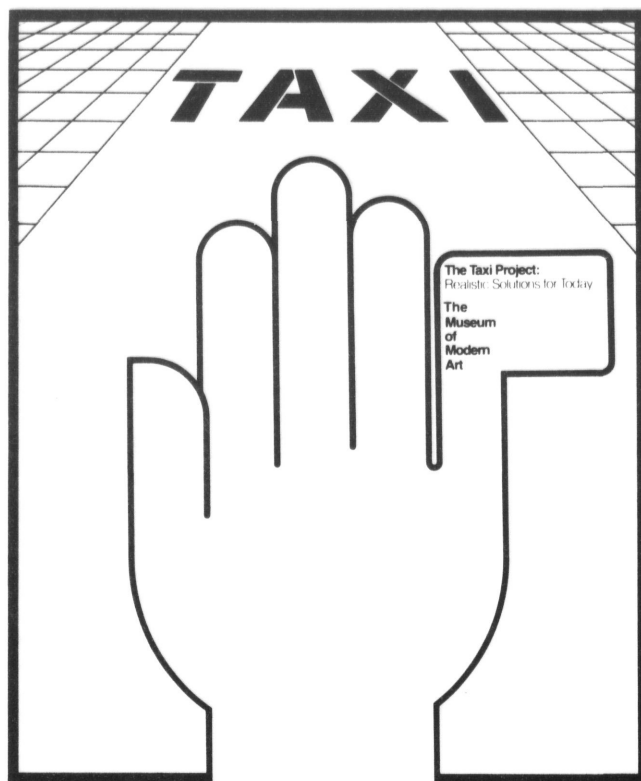
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THE TAXI PROJECT:
REALISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY
June 18 - September 7, 1976

Directed and installed by Emilio Ambasz, Curator
of Design, The Museum of Modern Art

Made possible by grants from
Mobil Oil Corporation and the
Urban Mass Transportation Administration of
the U.S. Department of Transportation

ALFA ROMEO TAXI PROTOTYPE



An Alfa Romeo taxi prototype, one of five such prototypes to go on view at The Museum of Modern Art June 18, is presented hors concours, according to Emilio Ambasz, Curator of Design at the Museum and director of the taxi project and exhibition. "When the Museum invited European manufacturers to design working prototypes of new and better taxis, the offer was intended for companies with manufacturing facilities in this country," he explained. "However, as the prototype produced by Ital Design under the creative direction of Giorgetto Giugiaro was developed de motus proprio, following the requirements developed by the Museum, we thought it would interest the American public." Volvo and Volkswagen working prototypes and two American taxi vehicles developed by AMF and SPS under a contract from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) are the central feature of the exhibition, which runs through September 7. The exhibition is made possible by grants from Mobil Oil Corporation and the U.S. Department of Transportation, UMTA.

Italian-designed automobiles have been shown at the Museum since the 1949 Cisitalia, designed by Pinin Farina, was included in the first automobile exhibition in 1951. In 1953 the Museum's exhibition of 10 automobiles reflected a strong Italian influence.

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The Alfa Romeo prototype is a front-wheel-drive taxi based on the chassis of a small Alfa Romeo van and powered by Alfa Romeo's dual-overhead-cam 4-cylinder engine. Upon this van chassis, Ital Design created a compact body marked by simple functional lines. The taxi offers excellent visibility for driver and passengers, easy accessibility, and comfort. A wide rubber belt encircling the body of the cab not only enhances general protection but also safeguards the car from damage caused by minor collisions and reduces maintenance costs.

The passenger compartment accommodates three people in a rear forward-facing seat. Two more can sit on folding seats facing the rear. A folding armrest in the center of the rear seat offers additional comfort when the taxi is occupied by only one or two passengers.

Anatomically designed seats equipped with safety belts and head rests afford comfortable seating positions. When the vehicle is at a standstill, the seats are relatively firm. In motion they become more comfortable as their flexibility is more effective with speed.

The baggage area is adjacent to the front passenger seat, enclosed by a vertical retaining lip. The floor here is covered with a special non-slip material. Extra baggage space is available to the right of the driver. Because the floor of the taxi is only 11.61 inches from the ground, entry and exit of passengers and handling of luggage are facilitated.

A sliding door on the curb side leaves the door opening completely free even in the most confined parking situations. The other door opens in a conventional manner. A retractable ramp under the floor can be pulled out to provide easy entry and exit for baby carriages and wheelchairs. Both passenger doors, which open from inside and outside, can be equipped with an electrical locking mechanism controlled by the driver.

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