

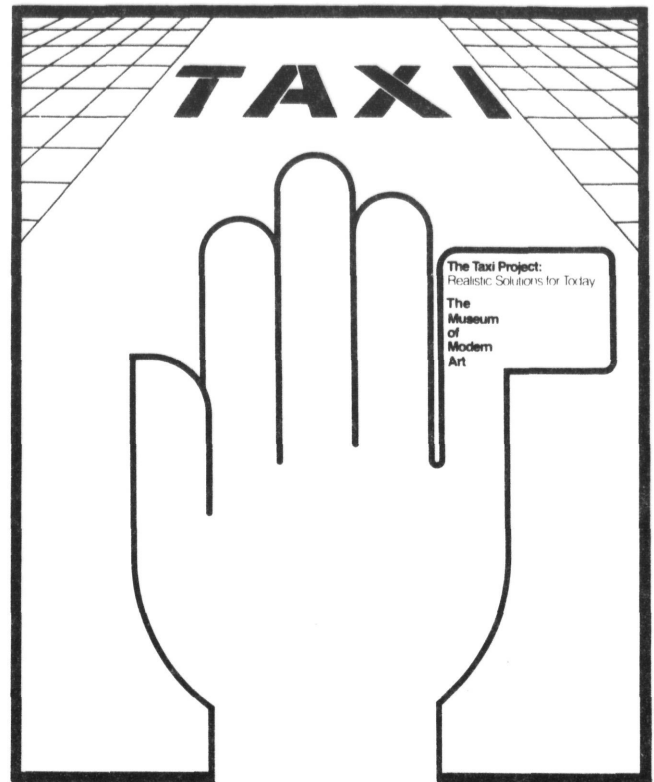
The Museum of Modern Art

No. 28

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

- In the U.S., taxicabs transport close to 40 percent more passengers than all rapid transit systems combined, or 60 percent more than all bus systems.
- Approximately 170,000 licensed taxicabs are the only form of public transportation available to more than 3,400 American communities.
- In New York City alone, taxis move 800,000 passengers per day, producing a monetary turnover greater than that of the Metropolitan Transit Authority.
- The taxi appears to be the only urban "transit" vehicle that is not expressly designed for its particular type of service.
- Taxis specially designed for meeting city traffic conditions might considerably improve the quality of life in the urban environment: they would use less energy, reduce air pollution, and cut traffic congestion, as well as provide safe and comfortable accommodations for passengers and luggage.
- An improved taxicab and an expanded range of taxi services such as jitneys, share-a-cab, subscription taxi and dial-a-taxi are clearly the most immediate and economical move which can be taken to improve public transportation in our cities and suburbs.
- If the taxi's importance as a public service were recognized and adequately financed and regulated the cab could be made to serve the needs of the handicapped, the old, and the poor who live around the core of central cities, in areas neglected by rail and bus transportation.

-- Emilio Ambasz



ADVANCE ADVICE TO EDITORS - April 1976

From: Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Linda Gordon, Associate Director,
Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art

Re: The Taxi Project: Realistic Solutions for Today

Dates: June 18 - September 7, 1976

Director of Project:
Emilio Ambasz, Curator of Design, The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.

Purpose: To produce with the cooperation of the automobile industry, at a reasonable cost, a vehicle which would better serve the needs of the taxi industry, the drivers, and the passengers.

To propose an expanded role for taxis as a supplement to existing mass transportation, in response to the need for an alternative to conventional transit and the private automobile.

To demonstrate that "paratransit" vehicles -- taxis, jitneys, dial-a-rides, subscription services, etc. -- are vital to the community in terms of the economy, the environment and the conservation of energy, as well as efficiency and convenience.

(more)

Publication: The Taxi Project: Realistic Solutions for Today by Emilio Ambasz. Essays by Emilio Ambasz, G.N. Georgano, Martin Wohl and Brian Richards. 8 1/2 x 10 inches; 176 pages; 232 illustrations (12 in color). Paperbound \$12. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Background: The Museum, with the aid of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, engineering consultants, and representatives of New York City taxi fleet owners and private taxi owners, drafted a Manual of Design Specifications for an urban vehicle which might serve as a taxi. Among the factors the companies were asked to consider were the safety and comfort of the driver, ease of communication with passenger, ease of loading and unloading baggage.

All major manufacturers of vehicles and motors in the United States were formally invited several years ago. As they declined to participate, the Department of Transportation made funds available for American companies who were willing to submit a vehicle answering to the Manual's specifications; contracts were awarded to American Machine and Foundry, Inc. and Steam Power Systems. In addition, the Museum invited European manufacturers with production facilities in the U.S. Volvo, which is presently building a car assembly plant in Chesapeake, Virginia, accepted the invitation, and Volkswagen was asked as they intend before 1980, to have a factory in America.

From the point of view of fleet owners, the new taxi designs will be more efficient and economical to operate and maintain. From the point of view of the passenger, they will be more comfortable and have enough room to allow a person with a large package or with a baby carriage or in a wheelchair to enter. From the point of view of the city, the prototypes will be designed with the serious intention of reducing pollution and traffic congestion.

Contents: The exhibition presents four working prototypes of taxis:

- American prototypes commissioned by the U.S. Department of Transportation:
 - American Machine and Foundry (Santa Barbara, California) -- 2-5 passenger; steam propulsion
 - Steam Power Systems (San Diego, California)-- 2-4 passenger; steam propulsion
- European prototypes:
 - Volvo (Sweden)-- 3-4 passenger
 - Volkswagen (Germany)-- 3-4 passenger; new hybrid gasoline-electric power system

In addition, the exhibition will feature as supplementary material:

- Continuous slide projections showing each of the working prototypes in use by passengers and in traffic
- Alfa Romeo taxi prototype presented hors concours
- Typical London cab
- Photographs and drawings of historical cabs from the United States and abroad

(more)

Exhibition made possible by grants from:

Mobil Oil Corporation

Urban Mass Transportation Administration of the U. S. Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies:

International Taxicab Association

New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission

New York City Taxi Drivers Union (Local 3036 AFL-CIO)

Openings:

Press Preview	June 16, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Museum Benefit Gala Preview	June 16, 9 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.
Members' Preview	June 17, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Public Opening	June 18

Press kits:

Release

Exhibition poster

Biography of Emilio Ambasz

Museum design background

Design Specifications Manual

Statements of policy by the different taxi prototype builders

Technical descriptions of individual vehicles

Releases on the separate cars

Black-and-white photographs and color slides of the prototypes

Text from catalog:

Introduction to Prototypes and

Introduction to Historical and Critical Section both by Emilio Ambasz

Essays:

Historical Survey of the Taxicab by George N. Georgano

The Present Role of Taxis in Urban America by Martin Wohl

The Taxi: Transport for the Future? by Brian Richards

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