

university of michigan school of art & design

# emergence

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## ALUMNI NEWS

“The most important thing you will take away from art school is your peers.” That statement by Professor Paul Stewart made a lasting impression on then-undergraduate Ruth Taubman (BFA ‘81). Today, with a highly successful career as a jewelry designer, Taubman confirms that establishing and maintaining personal relationships — including friends from her A&D days as well as her network of artisans, suppliers, gallery directors, and clients — remains key to her creative practice.

“My friends and I moved together from Michigan to New York and were each other’s support group — with apartments, with projects,” she says. “One of my first portfolios was photographed by a friend. Professionally, the world of gems is also built on trust. Even today, business transactions are often sealed with only a handshake.”

Taubman’s first employer, Paul Morelli of Philadelphia, introduced her to the next person she worked for, David Yurman. But Taubman soon decided to start her own business. “At first, I was partners with Eve Yunis, a fiber artist I had met at U-M. We produced a line of high-fashion jewelry and belts that was more wearable art than traditional apparel.



### RUTH TAUBMAN THE PERSONAL IS PROFESSIONAL



For four years, we were very successful.”

When the two parted amicably, Taubman launched a solo fine jewelry practice in a cooperative New York studio intentionally outside of the jewelry district. Taubman also showcased her work in galleries, not jewelry stores. This, too, was facilitated through a personal relationship. “One of my New York friends showcased my work in the window of his store in the jewelry district. As I was setting up, a Colorado gallery manager came by. A week later I had my work in his gallery.” Other galleries soon followed.

“Of course,” Taubman notes, “I met people through work. But I met many through other networks. Eventually, you meet the people with a similar mindset to yours. That allows a sense of intense loyalty, but also a shared language that offers a shorthand way of accomplishing things.” This focus

on cultivating relationships with like-minded people carries through to Taubman’s client philosophy. “I know that art strikes very personal emotional chords, and I have many long-term clients who share my vision. Even today I don’t advertise. All of my business is through private showings and referrals.”