



# The Rise of Labubu

## When Creativity Meets China's IP Acceleration Engine

In the world of collectibles, **ideas are only half the story**. Execution — and the system that supports it — is the rest.

Labubu is not just a cute figure. It's the result of a powerful intersection:

🎨 Artistic freedom

⚙️ Manufacturing speed

🌐 Global logistics

💰 Rising demand for emotional ownership

Let's unpack how these forces aligned to launch Labubu from a sketch to a global obsession — and what that means for indie creators like me.

### 1. Creativity without compromise: The Kasing Lung effect

Labubu's creator, **Kasing Lung**, wasn't designing by committee. He wasn't testing for market-fit or running consumer surveys. He was drawing from a deeply personal space — informed by **Hong Kong's indie art scene, European fairy tales**, and his own childhood memories.

What made this special is that Pop Mart **didn't dilute it**. They allowed his characters to remain strange, slightly dark, and emotionally layered.

This isn't always common. In many systems, creative weirdness gets "rounded off."

But here, Labubu was allowed to stay weird — and that's why it worked.

Pop Mart gave the artist space to express, not just perform.



### 2. China's manufacturing machine made it instant, scalable, and collectible

Now here's where the magic accelerates.

Once the IP gained traction, **China's production ecosystem** kicked in:

- Prototype today, shelf-ready next week
- Fast mold adaptation for limited editions
- Massive distribution capacity across Asia
- Aggressive gamification via blind boxes, drops, and FOMO-driven releases

Kasing Lung provided the soul.

**China's supply chain gave it speed.**

This wasn't a slow burn — it was a full-on ignition.

In other countries, great characters stay stuck in prototype limbo.

But in China, **the gap between "idea" and "object" is razor thin.**

### **3. The logistic loop: From Asia to the world and back again**

What happened next is something I find fascinating as a creator:

Labubu didn't blow up in China first.

It became a global phenomenon — and only then did the frenzy peak at home.

- Celebrities in the U.S. and Europe posted them casually
- TikTok and Instagram started unboxings
- Singapore, Thailand, and Korea got swept in
- Lines began forming in Seoul, overnight
- **Only then** did it feel "rare" in Beijing or Shanghai

A Chinese-born IP became "cool" abroad before being worshipped locally.

This is reverse-cultural validation — and it's not new.

We've seen it in fashion, food, even music.

But seeing it happen to **a toy** shows just how globalized desire has become.

### **What This Means for Indie IP Builders Like Me**

At UnaBra, I'm trying to create something small, strange, and quietly expressive.

A character that's more about feeling than marketing.

But Labubu reminds me: **emotion needs infrastructure.**

It's not enough to have a unique idea.

You need systems — or partners — that can translate it to form without flattening its soul.

That's the dance I'm learning:

- **Art without dilution**
- **Scale without commodification**

Not easy. But possible.

### **A Personal Note**

Sometimes, as indie creators, we think being “small” is our virtue.

But Labubu shows us that **you can go big without losing the weirdness** — if your ecosystem respects the creative spark.

At UnaBra, I don't have China's manufacturing engine.

But I do have this:

A belief that the emotional center of an IP must remain intact, no matter how fast or far it travels.

That's the kind of brand I want to build.