Christine Lu

Shanghai retail, China–U.S. networks, impact investment, and entertainment ventures

Christine Lu is a Taiwanese-American entrepreneur and investor, based in Los Angeles, whose work has moved between Chinese consumer markets, American technology networks, luxury travel, impact investment, and entertainment. Known online as **@christinelu**, she first built her professional experience in Shanghai retail and direct marketing, then became a producer and organizer of China-business podcasts, technology tours, and events. Her best-documented consumer venture, Affinity China, brought affluent Chinese travelers into private shopping and lifestyle programs with international brands. Her subsequent ventures include America Innovates, the investor community IXI Collective, Cross Border Lab, and the entertainment intellectual-property incubator IP3.[1, 2, 3]

Lu has combined these ventures with a public life that is not confined to business promotion. She has spoken about mental health, contributed to civic media, and participated in Taiwanese-American debates about China and online speech. Her working relationships have crossed retail, venture capital, family offices, and Hollywood; her activities have ranged from designing a catalog sales channel to convening investors and developing entertainment projects. Los Angeles became the base for much of this later work, while Shanghai, New York, Hawaii, and the traveling technology-event circuit supplied different audiences and collaborators.[4, 5, 6]

From Los Angeles and Boston to Shanghai

Lu has described immigrating from Taiwan to the United States as a small child in the 1970s. She grew up in Los Angeles and studied international relations, with an East Asian studies concentration, at Boston University. Her early employment took her through a family business, a foreign business association, and a television-shopping venture.[7, 8]

A contemporary conference biography places her move to Shanghai in 1998. There she interned at the American Chamber of Commerce, worked in design and marketing for her parents' clothing retail business, and entered an internet venture with the China retail specialist Janet Carmosky. That project was absorbed into TV Shopping Network, or TVSN. Its backing joined Asian investment capital with experience in duty-free retail and American home shopping: the biography names Robert Miller's Search Group, Prudential Assets Management Asia, and IAC's Home Shopping Network.[9]

This was an education in selling across media rather than simply an encounter with the early internet. Lu's responsibilities at TVSN extended across business development, e-commerce, direct marketing, and mail order. A later speaker biography dates her Shanghai marketing role to 1999–2004 and says she launched the catalog division in 2002. It credits the catalog with reaching almost

a million shoppers monthly and generating 51 percent of gross sales within two years. Those figures survive as biographical claims, not independently available operating accounts. The underlying task is nevertheless specific: use the retailer's customer database to make another sales channel work alongside television.[10]

The sequence matters to her later career. Before inviting American technology people into China or introducing Chinese buyers to American brands, she had worked inside a business that needed to convert an audience into transactions. Her parents' shop, Carmosky's retail experience, and TVSN's mixture of broadcast and direct response are identifiable professional settings. They put her early work inside the practical decisions of retailers: which medium to use, how to reach customers again, and how to turn that contact into a sale.

Interviews, bloggers, and technology tours, 2007–2009

After returning to the United States, Lu turned some of that experience into media. In March 2007 she created and hosted *The China Business Show* for *Entrepreneur*. The program developed into The China Business Network, which proposed to serve people working across multiple sectors of China-related trade and investment.[11]

The surviving interview trail shows the kinds of knowledge she sought. A September 2007 Web Wednesday post links her conversation with RealNetworks executive Eric Rosenblum about why American technology companies struggled in China. In a 2008 interview excerpt published by *The Internationalist*, she questioned Adidas executive Erica Kerner about the Beijing Olympics sponsorship program: what the company was doing, how its activities fitted together, and what justified the expense of being an official sponsor. These were conversations with practitioners about decisions and execution, aimed at listeners trying to operate in the same environment.[12, 13]

The network also moved off-screen. The 2008 China 2.0 tour brought international technology bloggers into contact with Chinese internet businesses. A participant's account credits Lu and Elliott Ng with the invitation and names The China Business Network, Web2Asia, CNReviews, and Edelman Digital China among the organizers and supporters. The tour depended on an itinerary, local hosts, sponsorship, and people who could report what they encountered. The bloggers were an audience, but also a means of extending the trip's reach beyond the travelers themselves.[14]

In 2009 Lu worked on Geeks on a Plane with Dave McClure.[15] The itinerary belonged to an emerging circuit in which investors, founders, bloggers, and event organizers visited technology communities together. Her subsequent speaker biography says she sold her interest in The China Business Network that year, though it gives neither transaction terms nor an account of the buyer.[16]

One particularly well-documented undertaking was the inaugural TEDxShanghai in June 2009. Web2Asia's contemporaneous report credits Lu and Sage Brennan with organizing it. Photographer and participant Kris Krüg places the gathering at M1NT, a Shanghai nightclub, during the Geeks on a Plane trip and close to a BarCamp gathering. The program crossed business presentations, urbanization, travel, and music; Krüg's account records performances as well as talks. The venue and mixed bill give the event a more precise social location than the subsequent résumé line "TEDx

curator." Lu was assembling an occasion where a traveling technology network could meet a local cultural and entrepreneurial scene.[17, 18]

These initiatives also establish important collaborators without requiring an inflated map of personal influence. Carmosky was part of Lu's early retail venture; Ng helped organize a blogger tour; Brennan co-organized TEDxShanghai; McClure worked with her on technology travel. The collaborations brought together different kinds of experience: retail operations, blogging, local event production, and venture investment. Lu's projects gave those interests occasions to overlap.

Affinity China and the luxury-travel business, 2011–2014

By 2008 Lu was already presenting in Hawaii on how new media could help businesses reach outbound Chinese travelers. Affinity China made that market into a venture of its own. Its public beta launch in June 2011 began with 88 selected VIP members. *Jing Daily* described selection in terms of business position and influence in China, with the promise of useful international access. Public founding accounts differ in their dates, so the beta is a firmer starting point than an unqualified incorporation year.[19, 20]

Affinity's company profile identifies Lu and Jessica Shu as founders and lists the media entrepreneur Yue-Sai Kan among its advisers. The venture sought two constituencies: Chinese members looking for privileged experiences abroad, and brands looking for a way to meet those customers. For the member, the offering was admission and treatment that ordinary travel arrangements could not reliably provide. For the brand, it was an assembled group of prospective buyers whose interests and expectations had already been considered.[21]

Dragon Week in New York in January 2012 showed what that meant in practice. A contemporary *FashionSpot* report describes a Bergdorf Goodman gathering, a fashion presentation, and a cocktail event attended by designers including Oscar de la Renta and Diane von Furstenberg. The wider program linked multiple retailers and luxury houses over the Chinese New Year holiday. This required cooperation from stores, designers, hosts, and guests, not merely an online directory of desirable places.[22]

At Piaget's Fifth Avenue boutique, the company's North American president Larry Boland co-hosted a Dragon Week event with Kan, identified in the report as Affinity's honorary chair. Such arrangements gave the visitors a recognizable host and the brand a setting for presenting its products. The public event record therefore makes some of Affinity's network visible: particular people and institutions committed rooms, appearances, and merchandise to a coordinated program.[23]

An April 2013 event at Ralph Lauren's Shanghai flagship provides a smaller-scale view. According to *Jing Daily*, drawing on Affinity's account, the store closed to host 30 guests. Models presented 13 designs; drinks, food, and gift bags accompanied the showing. Affinity planned the event. Here the service was the production of a controlled encounter between a brand and a selected audience. Its work included deciding who should attend, arranging the presentation, and making exclusivity tangible through the temporary transformation of a shop.[24]

The business belonged to a particular moment in China's outward consumption. Luxury retailers and destinations were trying to capture spending by travelers whose purchasing power increasingly mattered outside the mainland. Contemporary coverage of the 2012 New Year season connected this opportunity to American efforts to expand visa-processing capacity. Affinity was positioned within that opening, although favorable travel conditions did not by themselves establish its profitability.[25]

Lu's Hawaii work brings the glamorous proposition down to ordinary infrastructure. In a January 2013 interview, *Hawaii Business* identified her as a consultant to the Hawaii Tourism Authority. She discussed Chinese signage and the problem of retailers unable to accept customers' Chinese payment cards. She recalled accompanying business owners on a shopping trip where a customer could not complete a purchase because the store would not accept her card. The encounter exposes a limit to the invitation-only experience: arranging the right people and products was insufficient if payment failed at the register.[26]

Her own writing was more differentiated than the category "Chinese tourist" suggests. In an August 2013 *ChinaFile* discussion, she argued that China's inbound tourism marketing should move beyond a small set of obligatory landmarks and speak to distinct interests: food, contemporary art, backpacking, and less familiar places. Travelers who found experiences matching their interests would have reasons to return and recommend them. Though this argument concerned travel into China, it illuminates the attention to segmentation that also appeared in her outbound work.[27]

Affinity's ambitions expanded from experiences to assets. In March 2014 it announced an international real-estate division led by Patrick Kelly, previously head of developer services at Cushman & Wakefield in Shanghai. The announced offering paired advice for Chinese buyers with branding, marketing, and sales services for overseas developers. It included property selection and access to legal, tax, and financing support before and after a transaction. The same release named Derek Muhs as an Affinity co-founder. This was a more institutionally demanding proposition than a shopping event: customers were considering investment, education, migration, and family use, while developers wanted access to capital and buyers.[28]

Mental-health advocacy and public disagreement

Lu dates her mental-health advocacy to her sister's death by suicide in 2004. She has chosen to make that loss part of her public account, including on her own website. It should not be treated as an explanatory shortcut for every subsequent business decision.[29]

In a 2017 *Forbes* interview, she discussed the strain of combining entrepreneurship, caregiving, and expectations of professional success. She took responsibility for two failed startups and described learning to attend to her own well-being rather than treating greater effort as a sufficient answer to every difficulty. The interview records her retrospective understanding of those years, not an independently reconstructed history of the companies. Its significance in her work is that she was speaking about failure and mental health while also presenting herself as an investor and mentor, particularly to women and minority founders.[30]

A 2014 *Rocketship* podcast episode had already foregrounded her discussion of startup-founder depression. Her speaker biography also records advisory and speaking work for Let's Erase the Stigma. These activities placed mental-health concerns inside the same entrepreneurial communities in which she sought partners and capital.[31, 32]

Her public interventions were not confined to founder well-being. In March 2014 she objected to a Los Angeles billboard for the Las Vegas nightclub Tao that used the slogan "Always a Happy Ending" alongside an Asian-coded image. Coverage in *Character Media* and *LA Weekly* traced the objection from her social-media posts to a broader argument about the sexual stereotyping of Asian women. The episode is an instance of Lu using her public network to challenge a commercial message, rather than to promote a venture.[33, 34]

America Innovates, Cross Border Lab, and IXI Collective

By the middle of the 2010s, Lu's public work was increasingly described in the language of impact investment. America Innovates proposed to connect capital with founders, projects, and nonprofits pursuing innovation with social benefit. A 2015 Southern California Innovation Forum program names her as its VIP director and identifies her with America Innovates, placing this activity within the Chinese-American entrepreneurial institutions of Los Angeles.[35, 36]

The operational claims ranged from accelerator work to the development of innovation districts. General Assembly's biography also places Lu's Cross Border Lab work alongside True Family Enterprises, a family office active in real estate, consumer businesses, and investment. The association placed her market-entry work beside an investor whose activities extended across physical property, retail, entertainment, and venture capital.[37]

Cross Border Lab dates its founding to 2017. Its own company description presents a small Los Angeles-based collective working with brands, manufacturers, companies, and creators entering new markets. Its stated services span branding, sourcing and manufacturing, e-commerce, and retail. This is a broader commercial practice than the earlier China-luxury membership club: the proposed client could need help making a product, adapting it, or finding a channel through which to sell it.[38]

Lu was also participating in the Los Angeles entertainment world before IP3. The program for Silicon Dragon's 2018 Los Angeles event paired her in conversation with film producer Janet Yang. The setting linked Hollywood and Chinese business interests rather than treating entertainment as a wholly separate professional sphere.[39]

IXI Collective supplies a more concrete institutional outcome from this period. In December 2019 venture-capital firm Ixora announced its acquisition of the Los Angeles investment community founded by Lu. The purchaser described a network of more than 1,000 accredited investors and family offices, connected through a private app, events, and shared projects. It said the platform had syndicated more than a dozen deals across areas including technology, consumer brands, and the arts. The announcement disclosed neither purchase price nor portfolio returns.[40]

Under the announced arrangement, IXI would enter Ixora's invitation-only collective and Lu would become head of special projects. Ixora founder Benjamin Z. M. Lee said he had already participated in the community for nearly two years. The transaction suggests that Lu had built something another investment organization wanted to incorporate: a set of investor relationships and a way of convening them. It does not establish that IXI itself was a large discretionary fund. Syndicating opportunities, operating a membership community, and managing committed fund capital are different kinds of work.[41]

The current America Innovates website now emphasizes infrastructure development and lists a leadership team without Lu. It should not be used to assign today's projects to her. Her historical involvement is well attested; her present responsibilities there are not established by that site.[42]

IP3: creators, rights, and financing, 2021–2025

Lu's move into entertainment and Web3 became explicit through IP3. Securities documents date her work on the enterprise to 2021, while the Delaware corporation used for its crowdfunding offering was incorporated in November 2023. Those are different milestones. The filing assigns her responsibility for communications, investor relations, corporate strategy, and creator relations.[43, 44]

Her co-founders included producer David Miles Uslan, operations executive Sarah Weinstock, and attorneys Josh Lawler and Tom Zuber. Uslan's father, Michael, was an executive producer of the *Batman* film franchise. The company proposed developing Web3 characters into broader entertainment, drawing an analogy with comic-book adaptations.[45]

The practical offer was to identify and develop intellectual property, assemble creative and financial partners, and arrange licensing into film, television, publishing, merchandise, or other channels. Legal work, rights registration, project entities, and distribution were part of the proposed support. Lu's documented role sat where creators, investors, and the company's public presentation met. A creator's online following could provide an initial audience, but getting from that audience to a production required rights, financing, and organizations prepared to make and distribute something.[46]

A Los Angeles Venture Association event in 2022 introduced her as developing a children's entertainment franchise using food to explore different cultures. The event situated the project in Web3. The project gave a specific content focus to her interest in Web3.[47]

The financing record provides a scale against which to read the ambition. The May 2025 annual report recorded no sales revenue for 2024, $24,500 in grants and sponsorship income, and a $394,713 net loss. It described founders deferring compensation while the company developed its intellectual-property portfolio.[48] The crowdfunding campaign closed in March 2025 with $82,900 from 66 investors. Its March 2025 SEC progress report recorded the commitments and warned that final accounting had not yet occurred; the annual report also records $82,900 raised.[49, 50, 51]

The offering combined investment with access: perks included a private screening, investor communications, and a network offering events and lifestyle benefits. The membership element recalled her earlier ventures, now attached to an early-stage entertainment investment.[52]

The plan continued to change. In an October 14, 2025 investor update, IP3 announced a Culver City gallery and event location, a partnership with Machine Cinema around AI storytelling, and the postponement of Japan expansion and some Web3 events into 2026. These were dated company reports and intentions, not independently verified completed developments. When checked in November 2026, IP3's main website carried a rebuilding notice rather than a detailed current operating account.[53, 54]

Taiwan, civic media, and the limits of platform exchange

Lu's public voice continued alongside the businesses. Resistbot's March 2023 anniversary account credits her, Athena Fulay, Susan Stutz, and producer Angel Barrera with helping build its podcast. The organization uses messaging tools to support contact with elected officials and political organizing. This was another application of the interview-and-community work she had practiced in business media, now in a volunteer civic setting.[55]

In April 2023, she supported Tsai Ing-wen's Los Angeles visit and argued for Taiwan's people to be heard.[56]

Her response to the January 2025 influx of American users onto Xiaohongshu, also called RedNote, was more directly experimental. Interviewed by journalist Wenhao Ma, she described posting images involving Tiananmen, Tibet, and Taiwan to test what the platform would permit. These included Tank Man artwork, a bag bearing the Tibetan flag, and a *Top Gun* jacket with a Taiwan flag. She reported restrictions on the posts and then the banning of her account. The account establishes her test and experience; it does not reveal the platform's internal decision process or isolate which post caused the final action.[57]

She told *WIRED* that she supported Chinese and American people engaging directly, while doubting how long the unusually open encounter would last. That combination matters. Her criticism came from someone whose career had depended on exchange with China, not from a professional history outside it. The early podcast and technology tours had sought to put people into conversation; the later platform test addressed the political conditions under which such conversation could occur.[58]

On her personal site, Lu now places a small series of AI-generated images under the title *Dreaming of Taiwan*, alongside descriptions of her business and advocacy work. She calls them explorations. They are a modest but concrete continuation of her habit of trying new media herself, this time with Taiwan as the subject rather than a market-entry question.[59]

Sources and research limits

This profile was researched in November 2026 from public material, without an interview with Lu. Contemporary reports are used for events and dated roles; company biographies and releases are identified where they supply otherwise unverified claims. The accessible record does not establish a full investment portfolio, audited Affinity or IXI performance, the identities of the two failed startups mentioned in 2017, the full allocation of Affinity's revenue among membership, services and transactions, or the completion of IP3's later plans. Historical titles have not been silently converted into present appointments. Accounts of Lu's family loss are confined to what she herself made relevant to her public advocacy.

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1. Christine Lu, personal website, undated, checked November 2026. Self-description and *Dreaming of Taiwan* gallery.↩
2. ChinaFile, Christine Lu contributor biography. Historical Affinity-era biography; its displayed update date does not establish a current appointment.↩
3. Ixora, "VC Firm Ixora Acquires Los Angeles-Based IXI Collective", December 19, 2019. Purchaser's announcement; financial terms undisclosed.↩
4. General Assembly, Christine Lu biography, undated.↩
5. Christine Lu, personal website, undated, checked November 2026. Self-description and *Dreaming of Taiwan* gallery.↩
6. Melanie Dione, "Resistbot at Six: Building a Community", March 8, 2023.↩
7. *The Resistbot Podcast*, "Our American Stories", October 25, 2021. Episode description supplies the immigration account.↩
8. PodCamp Hawaii, "Podcamp Speaker: Christine Lu (with Roxanne Darling)", October 10, 2008.↩
9. PodCamp Hawaii, "Podcamp Speaker: Christine Lu (with Roxanne Darling)", October 10, 2008.↩
10. AAE Speakers, Christine Lu biography, undated. Used as a historical professional biography, not as independently audited evidence of sales or current roles.↩
11. PodCamp Hawaii, "Podcamp Speaker: Christine Lu (with Roxanne Darling)", October 10, 2008.↩
12. Web Wednesday, 2007 archive, September 18 entry on Lu's interview with Eric Rosenblum.↩
13. *The Internationalist*, late-spring 2008 issue, edited China Business Network interview with Erica Kerner.↩
14. Family Travel Logue, "I'm Thinking About the Future, Not the Rotten Economy, and That's Why I'm Going to China", participant's contemporary account of China 2.0.↩
15. ChinaFile, Christine Lu contributor biography. Historical Affinity-era biography; its displayed update date does not establish a current appointment.↩

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23. WorldTempus, “Piaget: Dragon and Phoenix Collections Unveiled”, February 13, 2012.↩

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26. Beverly Creamer, “Tourism Carries ‘Sub-Par’ Hawaii Economy”, *Hawaii Business*, January 3, 2013, section on Chinese luxury travelers.↩

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28. Affinity China International Real Estate, division announcement, March 27, 2014. Company release.↩

29. Christine Lu, personal website, undated, checked November 2026. Self-description and *Dreaming of Taiwan* gallery.↩

30. Ally Bogard and Allie Hoffman, interview with Christine Lu, *Forbes*, May 22, 2017.↩

31. *Rocketship*, Christine Lu interview on startup-founder depression, July 8, 2014, listed in Podcast Republic’s show archive. Episode metadata, not a transcript.↩

32. AAE Speakers, Christine Lu biography, undated. Used as a historical professional biography, not as independently audited evidence of sales or current roles.↩

33. *Character Media*, “Vegas Nightclub Billboard Offends Asian Americans”, March 27, 2014.↩

34. *LA Weekly*, report on Tao’s response to the billboard criticism, March 31, 2014.↩

35. Gaebler, America Innovates company record. Historical description and 2015 financing entry.↩

36. PlusYoou, Southern California Innovation Forum 2015 program.↩

37. General Assembly, Christine Lu biography, undated.↩

38. Cross Border Lab, company description, founding date and service areas.↩

39. Silicon Dragon, Los Angeles 2018 event program.↩

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41. Ixora, “VC Firm Ixora Acquires Los Angeles-Based IXI Collective”, December 19, 2019. Purchaser’s announcement; financial terms undisclosed.↩

42. America Innovates, current website and team, checked November 2026.↩

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47. Los Angeles Venture Association, “Media NFTs, Part 3”, 2022 event and speaker description.↩

48. IP3 Labs Inc., 2025 Form C-AR. May 8, 2025, especially PDF pages 2, 21–22, and 28. The report gives February 28 and March 2 in different places for the crowdfunding close; the C-U and Republic give March 2. All report $82,900.↩

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55. Melanie Dione, “Resistbot at Six: Building a Community”, March 8, 2023.↩

56. *The Guardian*, report on Tsai Ing-wen’s U.S. visit, April 7, 2023.↩

57. Wenhao Ma, “American TikTok Users and Beijing”, January 17, 2025. Reporter’s account of his interview with Lu.↩

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