

nine years and became an Australian citizen in 2004, if she feels a part of Australia or like an immigrant. “When I arrived I felt foreign and often rejected. I looked, dressed and communicated differently. Now I feel like there is little trace of the difference. I feel very much accepted in my new home.

“Ninety-eight percent of people I have been lucky enough to meet on my journey of life have been amazing. The other two percent I have learned lessons from,” she says philosophically, with a shrug of her shoulders.

Last year she was the proud recipient of the inaugural Sunshine Coast Multicultural Excellence Awards for her contribution to art. The awards recognise the rich cultural diversity on the Sunshine Coast. Anna is a shining example of this.

Looking to the year ahead, Anna is excited about the future and her prospects.

A cache of new works is currently in progress. The Sunshine Coast, and possibly Brisbane or Sydney, will play host to more delights from this talented artist with an exhibition, *Dualité de vite*, planned in 18 months. Anna is in her element. Painting is what gives her pleasure.

Light streams in from a top window of the breezy studio where Anna animatedly shows me her latest ideas – a half-finished canvas of glamorous high-heeled shoes slung over powerlines, and photos of strong, little scarab beetles scuttling over miniature pumpkins. The concepts are in the traditional technique but cheeky and fun. The style is distinctively Anna’s.

As a resident of the Sunshine Coast but a world traveller, Anna’s work is about to be showcased on a grand scale. Currently, she is negotiating an around-the-world exhibition in New York, Paris, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur. New and old works will be exhibited. It will certainly be the pinnacle of her illustrious career so far.

Anna also dedicates some of her time to working with Sunshine Coast women, honing their personal style through her business *Art of Style*. Voted one of Queensland’s 50 most stylish people, Anna is well placed to offer advice in this area. “Style is mostly about your attitude in life, the place that you live, the friends you have, the food you eat, the car you drive, the books you read ... I help people to express themselves authentically.”

Travel is also on the cards this year. Anna takes a trip to Europe each year primarily to see her mother (who has since remarried) in her home town of Moscow. “I am very close to my mother. I love and respect her. I must visit her every year, even if just briefly.” An extended trip to Europe to visit new places is planned to get Anna inspired. “I want to take pictures and collect artefacts. I love to spend money on truly beautiful things.”

Anna’s life today as a professional painter living on the beautiful Sunshine Coast is a far cry from the little girl who grew up in Moscow surrounded by rich culture dreaming of what her life could be.

Anna declares, “I live a blessed life, full of love, amazing friends and adventures which I’m truly grateful for.” And it is one she has uniquely created with determination and passion. “I have taken risks all my life. If you do that, all the victories are yours.” ■



ANNA, PICTURED IN HER STUDIO WITH ONE OF HER BELOVED BEAGLES, ELLIE BELLIE, WEARS SALITA MATTHEWS CONCEITED DECEIT DRESS (WWW.SALITAMATTHEWS.COM) AND STUNNING GOLD HOOP EARRINGS BY MARK COTTERELL (WWW.MARKCOTTERELL.COM). ANNA'S OWN COBALT BLUE SHOES (SHE HAS A SHOE FETISH!).