



Becky olvera schultz was born in El Paso, Texas, with a varied lineage—her mother is Italian and her father is of Mexican Azteca and Kickapoo Indian descent. She spent the first part of her childhood growing up on the army base near White Sands, New Mexico. Drawn to the Native American art of the Southwest from an early age, she majored in art as an undergraduate student. However, she did not pursue a career in art until 1993, after her only brother tragically committed suicide. Olvera Schultz found that working with clay helped her heal by providing her with a physical means of expression. Her family and friends encouraged her to begin exhibiting her art, and her masks are now in private collections throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Inspired by native cultures and her own indigenous heritage, Olvera Schultz creates lifelike portrait masks from clay. Decorated with horsehair, rabbit fur, bison horn, turkey feathers, and glass beads, the expressive masks use natural materials to represent indigenous peoples in a contemporary form. "I have directed my consuming interest in the native peoples of the Americas into my own personal art expression," she says. "I derive immense satisfaction from putting life into the materials I work with. My art is an extension of my spirit, a piece of my vision, and a constant source of comfort for me."

Olvera Schultz also designs jewelry, rawhide shields, and a popular series of dolls. She has recently started converting black-and-white photographs of contemporary Native Americans into screen prints, or serigraphs. "I want people to realize that it is a living culture, not just a historical one," she says. Her work has been represented in galleries throughout the United States, including the Marin Museum of the American Indian in California, and she has six solo museum exhibitions to her credit.