

Sandow Birk  
*Dante's Divine Comedy*

SF

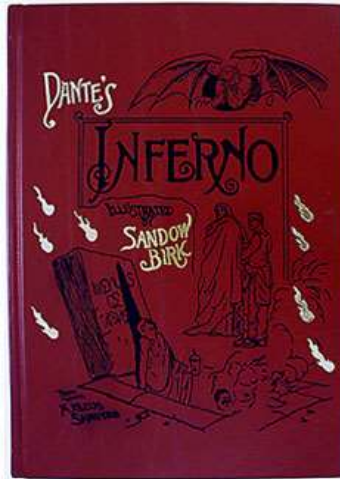
248 Utah Street  
SF, CA 94103  
+ 415 399 1439

NY

313 W 14th Street 2F  
New York, NY  
By appointment only

WEB

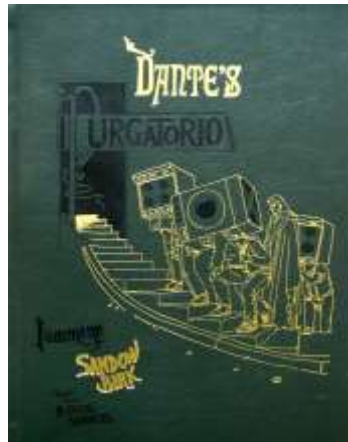
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**About *Inferno***

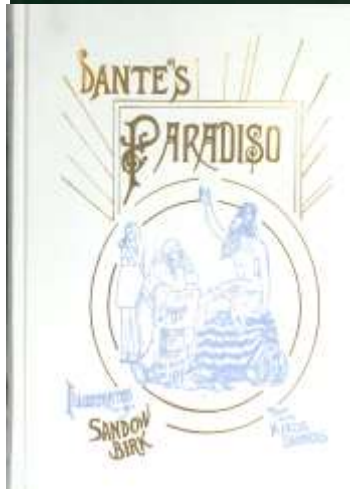
*Inferno*, the first canticle of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, was adapted by Sandow Birk and Marcus Sanders. In addition to rendering the language of the poem into a contemporary American English vernacular, Birk has also re-interpreted 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrator, Gustave Dore's, drawings. The text is accompanied by 71 of Birk's original lithographic images, which locate hell in contemporary, urban areas, including downtown Los Angeles. The hand-signed, continuous tone, lithographic images are drawn with an ink-filled drafting pen to create intricate cross-hatching and fine lines. The book is bound in dark red leather with gold stamping. It is the first book in the trilogy. All of the

images for the book were hand drawn by the Birk who worked with Master Printer, David Salgado, to print and publish *Inferno* at Trillium Press. The edition is 100 (plus a number of proofs). The book contains introductions by Doug Harvey and Michael Meister. (See below for more information on the lithographic illustrations.)



**About *Purgatorio***

*Purgatorio*, the second canticle of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, is about the climb out of *Inferno* toward *Paradiso*. *Purgatorio* contains 69 original signed lithographs, a dynamic translation by the artist and co-author Marcus Sanders, and is bound in dark green leather with gold stamping. In Birk's images, Purgatory is largely located in San Francisco with trips by Dante and Virgil to Bali and Tokyo. Birk again collaborated with Master Printer David Salgado of Trillium Press, where the book was published in an edition of 100 (plus proofs). The book contains introductions by Marcia Tanner, Michael Meister and Ron Murphy.



**About *Paradiso***

*Paradiso* is the third canticle of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Birk is again collaborating with author Marcus Sanders to adapt the text into contemporary language. *Paradiso*, which situates Paradise in New York, contains approximately 70 original lithographs and is bound in white leather with blue and gold stamping. Released in January 2005, it was printed and published by Trillium Press in an edition of 100 (plus proofs).

### The Lithographic Illustrations

Lithography preserves Sandow Birk's autographic mark, faithfully reproducing his hand. For Birk's drawings it was important to capture the fine line of his drawings and print them with tone inside of each line. To do this, each lithographic plate, which was hand drawn by Birk, is actually a sheet of transparent, textured drafting film. Using an ink-filled drafting pen with a 000 nib, the drawings for each of the projects were done the year prior to each of the publications in the trilogy being released. For *Inferno*, the drawings were completed during 2002, for *Purgatorio*, 2003, and *Paradiso*, 2004. Some of Birk's intricate cross-hatching and fine line work is enhanced with black pencil. As a counterpoint to the black pen lines, white lines and tonal subtleties were made by scratching and scraping the drawing with scalpels and razor blades.



The illusion of grey from the cross-hatching becomes real grey tone in lines that in themselves have tone. The edges of the line are not mechanical, but have the nuance of drypoint without the indirect feedback of scratching on a plate. Lithography works on the principle that there is a natural antipathy between water and ink. With quadruple inking, plus using the nap of the paper picked up on the printing blanket, the elusive continuous tone line is achieved.