



# CSRA SIERRA BRAND GUIDELINES

MARCH 2023



**The Canadian Socialist Rifle Association** is an organization that is both based off of but operates independent from the United States Socialist Rifle Organisation. The aim of the CSRA is to provide the working class with the education they need to be effectively and legally armed and able to act in service of their community, in a space free of reactionary prejudice.

This includes but is not limited to skills and practice in the safe and legal usage of firearms, emergency medicine, logistics, agriculture, survival, and mutual aid.

**The practical realities of existing as a leftist organisation in Canada, however, differ from those of the American SRA.**

Canadian laws are stricter and more tenuous; the CSRA must operate more carefully than counterparts south of the border.

Additionally, the doctrine and theory behind of socialist movements have changed over the last 100, 50, even 15 years. We are witnessing a new resurgence of the left among a new generation of young people, who are more diverse and outspoken a demographic than ever.

These factors combined have necessitated our new Canadian Socialist Rifle Organisation adopt a bold new visual branding system that reflects this contemporary and challenging political landscape.



“A few distinct tensions mark national LGBTQ histories and emerge as key features in LGBTQ design. The first and perhaps most important of these is the **ambivalent relationship between seeking broad societal acceptance** and finding innate value in homosexuality’s **outlaw history**...

## IS THERE A WAY TO RECONCILE THE SPLIT IN ACTIVIST DESIGN?

...indeed, this tension exists graphically, too, in the difference between the **unabashed flamboyance** of Gilbert Baker’s rainbow pride flag and the **focus group-tested logo** of the Human Rights Campaign—who, in working closely with design firm Stone Yamashita Partners, made LGBTQ concerns palatable to a broad swathe of the US electorate.”

— *Andy Campbell, Queer x Design*



**BE STRIKING**

**BE INCLUSIVE**

**BE ADAPTIVE**

The Sierra branding system is designed to reflect the face of the new wave of progressive, 21st-century socialism sweeping across the world. An aesthetic and style that has newfound unapologeticism in its convictions, radical approach to diversity and inclusivity, and newfound interest in adapting itself to suit any context.

# THE LOGO

The Sierra logo was designed with the tenets of being striking, inclusive, and adaptive. The logo takes inspiration from the socialist coat-of-arms aesthetic, including the logos of our SRA siblings south of the border, but with a fresh and bold new appearance that looks to the future more than the past.

## WAIT, WHO'S SIERRA?

Sierra (they/them) is the nickname for the deer in the logo, a kind of blunt derivation based on the letters "C-S-R-A".

Sierra is a deer, a traditional "prey" or "hunted" animal who, like us, are depicted as weak and easily frightened by the powers that be, to be chewed and consumed by the jaws of our ravaneous capitalist society—no more.

Sierra can also appear in a two-legged, all-walking-and-talking anthropomorphic form, with more typical antlers.



Sierra aligns towards the left, but stands alert turned towards and watching the right.



# LOGO VARIATIONS

To work in different contexts and sizes, the Sierra logo system comes in three primary variations: Coat of Arms, Cropped, and Unframed.

Consider tone and formality when choosing between these logos. Who is your design for? What will appeal to them? What level of professionalism or casual-ness is appropriate?



**COAT OF ARMS**

The most traditionally “socialist” logo of the lineup, with a large, visually heavy frame.

This version works well at large sizes when the logo needs to take visual presence. It’s also “fully contained”, as it displays the CSRA initials, and requires no wordmark.

Avoid using this variant at small sizes, and keep in mind that the “traditional socialist” vibes it gives off may be inappropriate for certain contexts.



**CROPPED**

This version is the most versatile of the lot, as it balances readability at small sizes with a striking composition. It also doesn’t read as overtly political while retaining a confident look. The cropped variant pairs better with text, especially if spelling out “CSRA” next to it.

If in doubt, the cropped version should be your first go-to logo. Bear in mind equilateral triangles can be difficult to visually centre vertically.



**UNFRAMED**

The version without any frame, leaving Sierra and the three-round emblem open to the elements.

The unframed version is designed for situations where the logo will be placed inside an existing frame, such as a social media profile picture.

Keep in mind that without the frame, centering the logo can be more difficult—use the middle bullet to align the logo.

# MARGINS AND SPACING

An easy rule of thumb is to take height of the three-round emblem as a measure for margins.

The minimum recommended clearance is half a round height all around the image. For a more comfortable margin, use a full round height. The more complex the logo is, the more margin you should consider allocating.





# THE TYPEFACE

For the Sierra branding system, Manrope is the selected typeface for standard body copy. The typeface exudes a bit of character, but on the whole remains very versatile and neutral. The family supports 7 different weights as well as extended Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic sets.

The neutrality of this typeface is important as, like the logos, it can be dressed up or down with various type combinations depending on what the situation calls for.

## USING THE TYPEFACE

When using the typeface for allcaps headers, adding a bit of tracking (space between characters) helps readability.

For readability, it is also recommended to increase leading (vertical line spacing) to about 1.3x the font size—for example, type set at 14pt should have line spacing of about 18pt.

**Please note that Manrope does not come with italics.** You may use oblique (artificially skewed) option in your typesetter instead, optimally at 10 degrees.

# THE CSRA

## Canadian Socialist Rifle Association

All firearms are to be treated as if they were **loaded**.

“Hey, *asshole*,” Sierra called out, grabbing their AR off the bench by the handguard. “I’m the Socialist, and I’m properly Associated with this here f\*\*\*ing Rifle.”

## DEMOCRACY IN CAPITALISM

**Elections outside the workplace** stand in an ambivalent relation to capitalism’s exclusion of real democracy inside. On the one hand, elections distract people from their conscious and unconscious upsets with working conditions. Elections focus instead on political candidates, parties, and alternative policies around issues other than capitalism versus alternative economic systems and other than their respective working conditions. That is why supporters of capitalism appreciate elections. Well-controlled elections do not question, let alone threaten, capitalism.

— Richard D Wolff, *Capitalism’s Crisis Deepens: Essays on the Global Economic Meltdown*

# MONO BLACK

## COLOURWAYS

The standard monochromatic black version with a full alpha channel. This version can be easily modified to fit any two-colour combination.

Mono colourways come with a filled variant, which may be preferable in other circumstances.



# MONO WHITE

The white monochromatic variant, for dark backgrounds. Using a design with black as a dominant colour tends to give off a more professional feel.

## COLOURWAYS

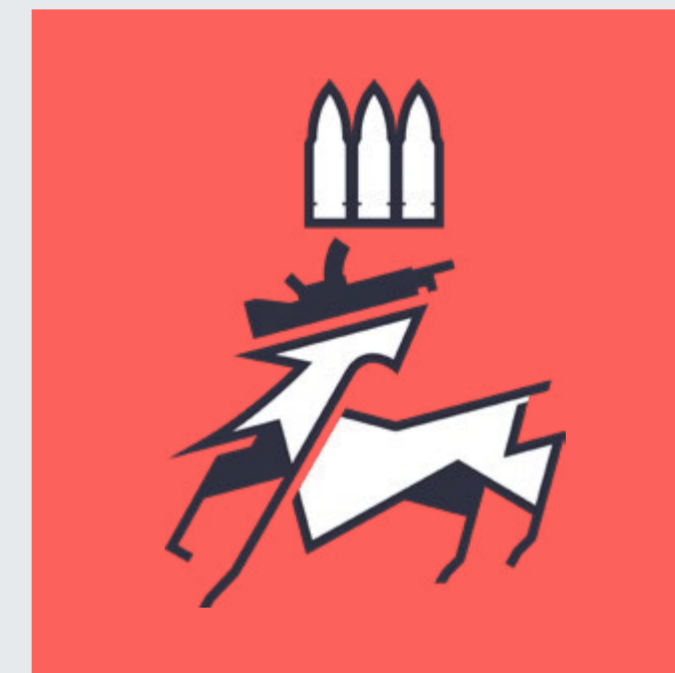


# ASTRONAUT

Bold colours with a pale note. With a retro-inspired colour palette, this colourway could be very wearable as a patch or graphic tee that doesn't come across as overtly political at first glance.



## COLOURWAYS



2f3141

577296

c2daef

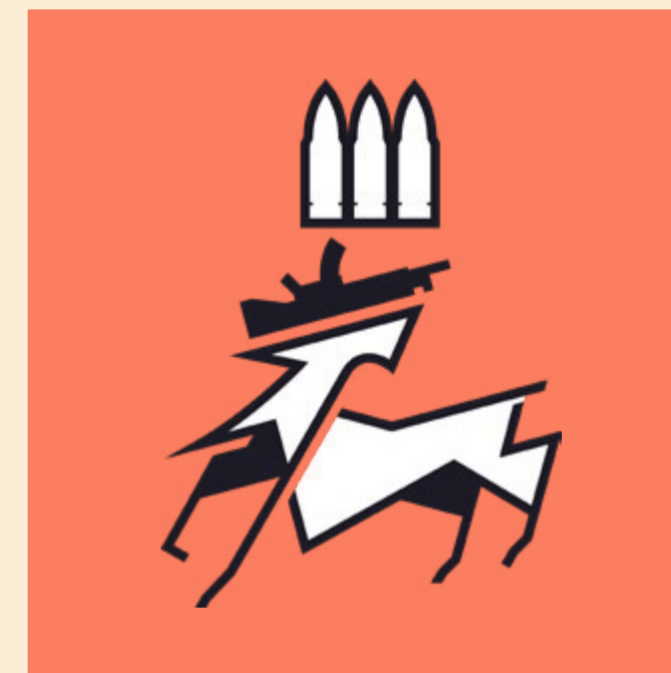
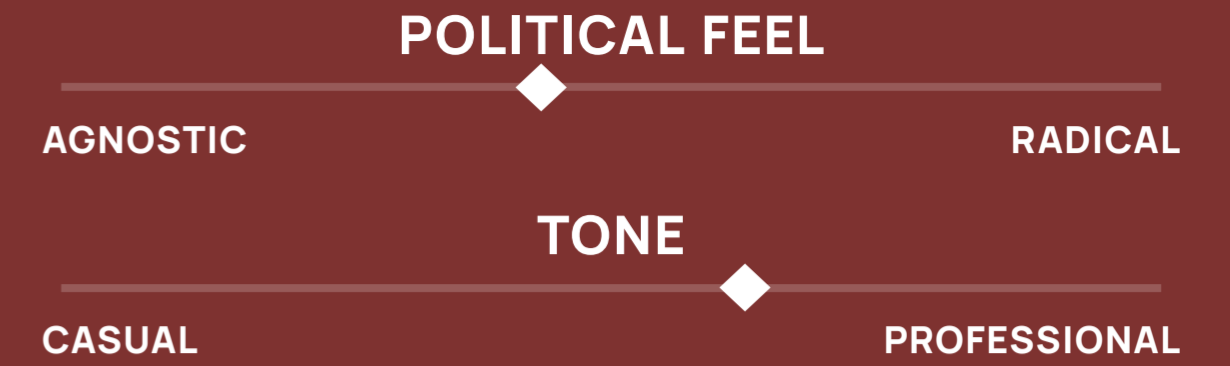
fc615c

ffffff

# AUTUMN

COLOURWAYS

The warm, autumn colours palette sits in an ambiguous space that alludes to classic reddish socialist colours without being explicit.



131222

7e3230

d1524a

fc7e61

fcc681

ffffff



# AUTUMN DARK

The dark variant of the Autumn colour palette bring out the golden tones of the original scheme, giving an elegant flair that feels almost luxurious.

COLOURWAYS



131222

7e3230

d1524a

fc7e61

b56548

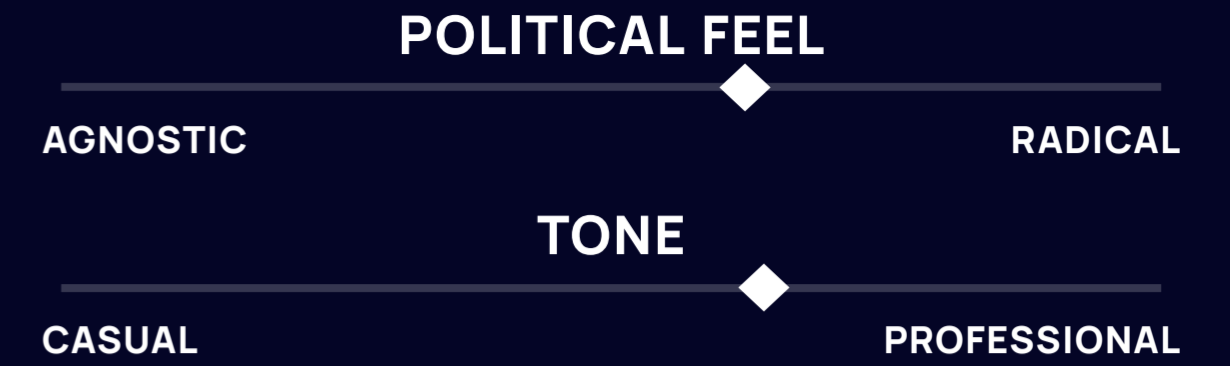
fcc681



# ECLIPSE

## COLOURWAYS

This palette is inspired by red-black anarchist colours, though the prominent use of white and the subtle swap for deep navy over pure black tempers the political feel.



040526

8a2b2c

e1413a

ffffff

# ECLIPSE DARK

## COLOURWAYS

The Eclipse colour palette adapted for use on dark backgrounds. Trades a lot of the immediate association with anarchist groups for a sense of professionalism. This is the colourway used on the cover of this document.



040526

8a2b2c

e1413a

ffffff

# INKSTAMP

COLOURWAYS

The combination of the homebrew-like red and cool greys and less-obvious (but still present) political feel might make this good for public handouts and flyers.



2f3141

8b97a9

e13e34

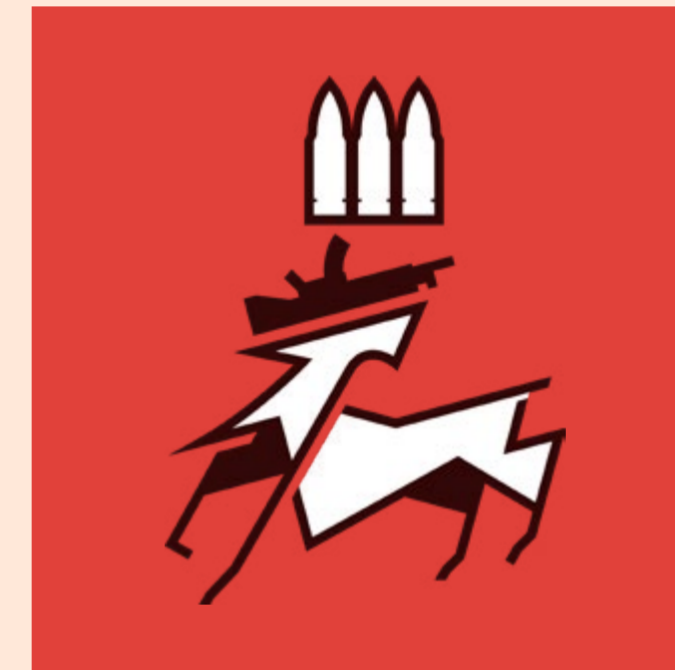
ffffff



# LABOUR

Inspired by the classic colours of gold-and-red socialist logos, including that of the American SRA. The analogous colours make the logo look a bit professional, but also very explicitly politically left.

## COLOURWAYS



330a08

8b2527

e13e34

fd913b

ffffff

## A NOTE FROM THE DESIGNER

As an otherwise very privileged international student of design coming to Canada to escape political persecution, I felt compelled to donate my time and effort to a leftist organisation such as this one in at least one way I knew how. The Sierra branding represents the fruits of those efforts, and I felt that allowing a grassroots leftist org access to what I think are professional design practises and branding is the least I could do.

That being said, the Sierra branding system is not meant to be a truly universal nor universally-enforced “supreme” singular branding style of the CSRA. Multiple members and volunteers are working on their own branding systems which serve as alternatives to this one; Sierra is merely one such option.

I believe that the designers of the mid-century Modernist period who championed so-called “Universal Design” ended up with something that was anything but; the oversight of considering the specific circumstances and contexts of the people they were supposedly serving in favour of a Western-supremacist outlook arguably led to the failure of the Modernist project, and I believe we should be wary of repeating those mistakes again.

Of course, if the organisation at large wishes to adopt this as its singular “official” branding system, I suppose I would not have any real right to go against the wishes of democratic consensus. But, otherwise, I implore anyone interested in the contents of this

document to also explore the alternative methods of representing the organisation. There may be other systems that resonate more with you, and that can only be a good thing. If the failures of Western neoliberal capitalist culture teach us anything it should be that we are stronger when we embrace our diversity, not when we suppress it.

