

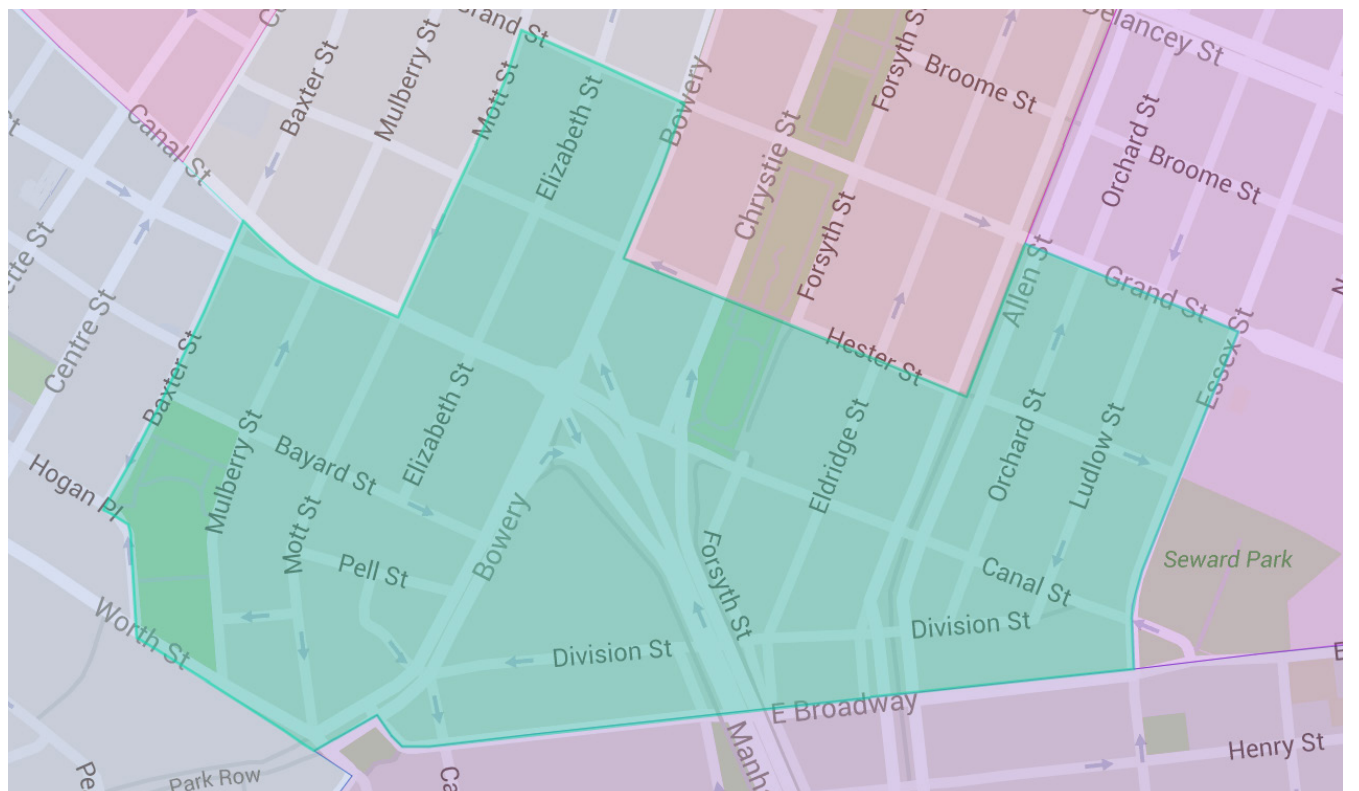
Chinatown

Documenting the many personalities of a neighborhood on the rise.

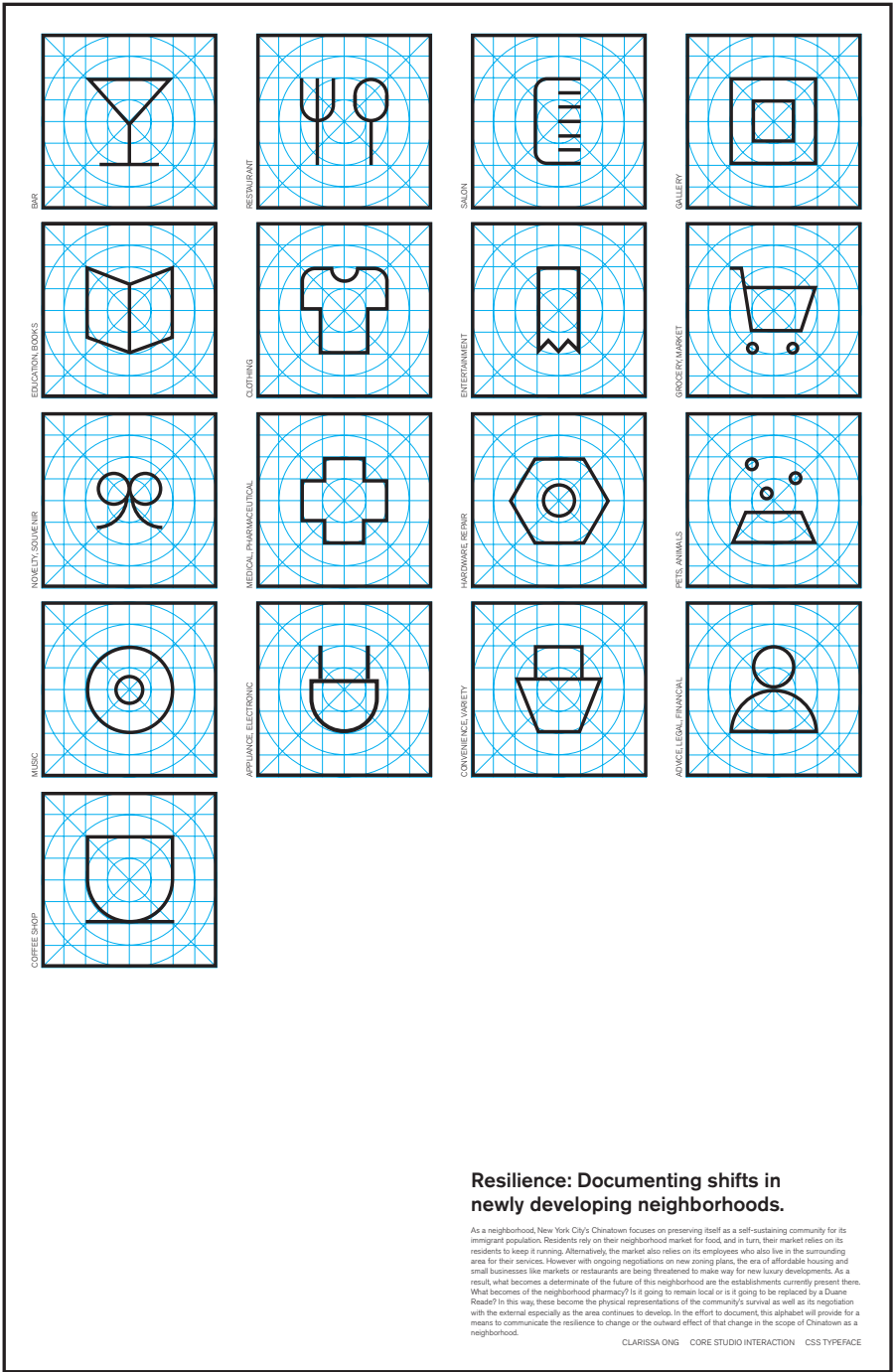
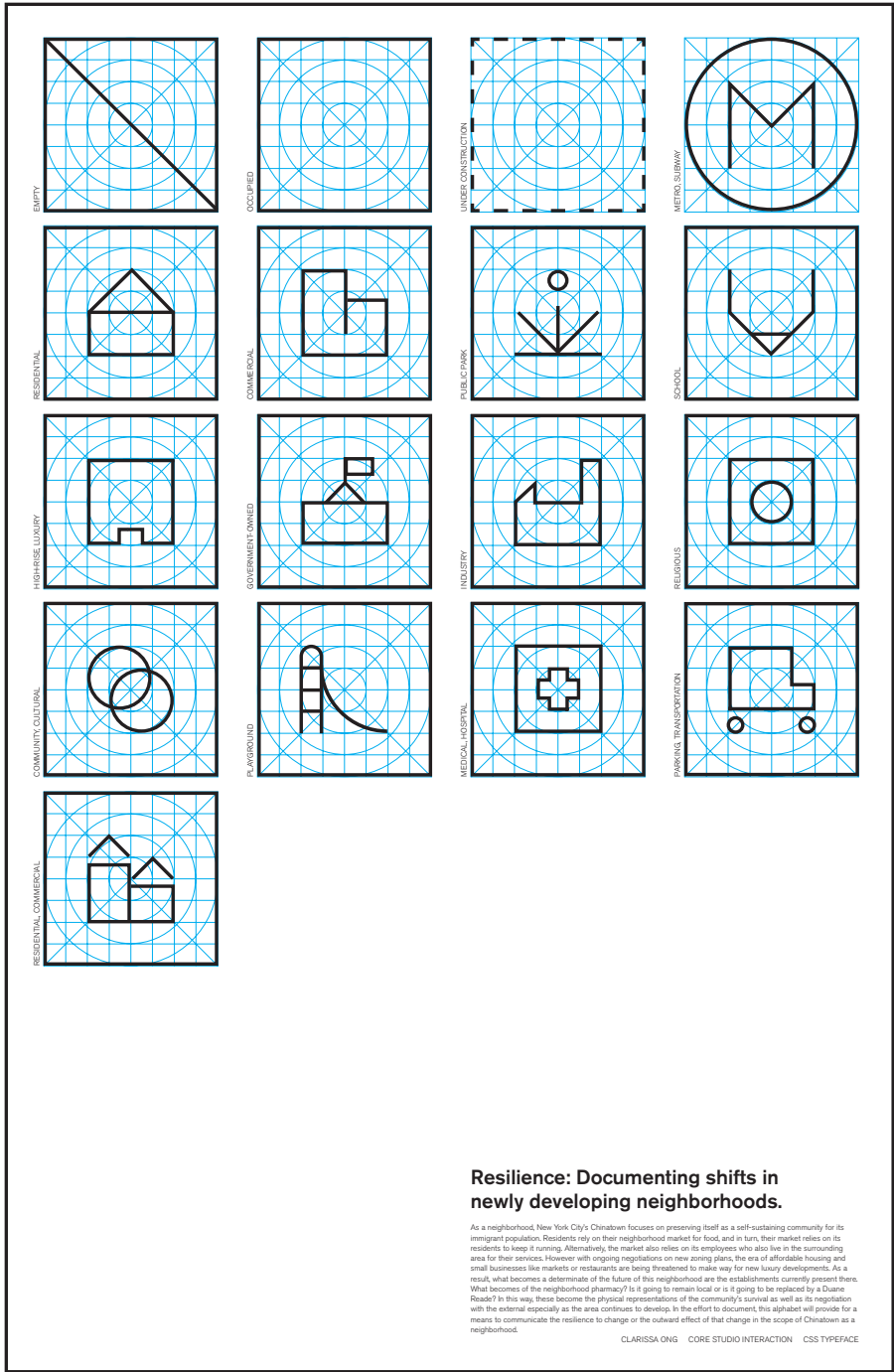
From the sunday dim-sum rush to the habitual mah-jong game in the park, New York's Chinatown is a place all its own. To a portion of the city's immigrant population, the area even seems like a home away from home. However, with negotiations against new zoning regulations gone awry, the exact definition of Chinatown seems to be shifting. Ancient awnings of laundromats and construction suppliers are being replaced with scaffolding and real estate advertisements as interest piques on the area's potential in the market. What then of the neighborhood pharmacy and of the neighborhood 99 cents store? In the effort to provide a means of documentation, this alphabet will attempt to provide the resources to record these specific shifts. Moreover, each will try to manifest as a vignette of the area and what might be an untold resiliency in maintaining Chinatown as a home rather than the latter. Based on some on-site explorations, the documentation will involve 1 out of 3 studies of streets in the area: Orchard Street, The Bowery, and Eldridge Street.

BELOW

An image capture from realtor.com.
http://www.realtor.com/local/Chinatown_New-York_NY/lifestyle



A.



ABOVE
Previous Icon Sketches, Simplified Version.

A development in thought process.

In the process of providing the alphabet with a context in the web, I eventually found issue in the follow-through of my driving concepts. I was pretty adamant that these icons would *document* gentrification using the language of gentrification, which is inherently spatial. However, I was starting to lose context as the project was progressing and was making spatial icons about everywhere else except for Chinatown. So in the effort to review what gentrification looks like for Chinatown, I had to revisit the area.

A.



ABOVE
An image of a doorway in one of Chinatown's streets.

Finding context as a patchwork.

While exploring, I had it in my mind to look for ‘texture’ in the context of any cultural, yet graphic form. Eventually, I ended up finding this ‘texture’ in the area’s spatial variation. While some buildings still maintained a look which is inherently Chinese, others seemed to reject this notion. Through this juxtaposition, Chinatown almost took form as a patchwork of the old and new. All seemed to coexist as a certain point and I decided the alphabet system would strive to take on this quality.

A.



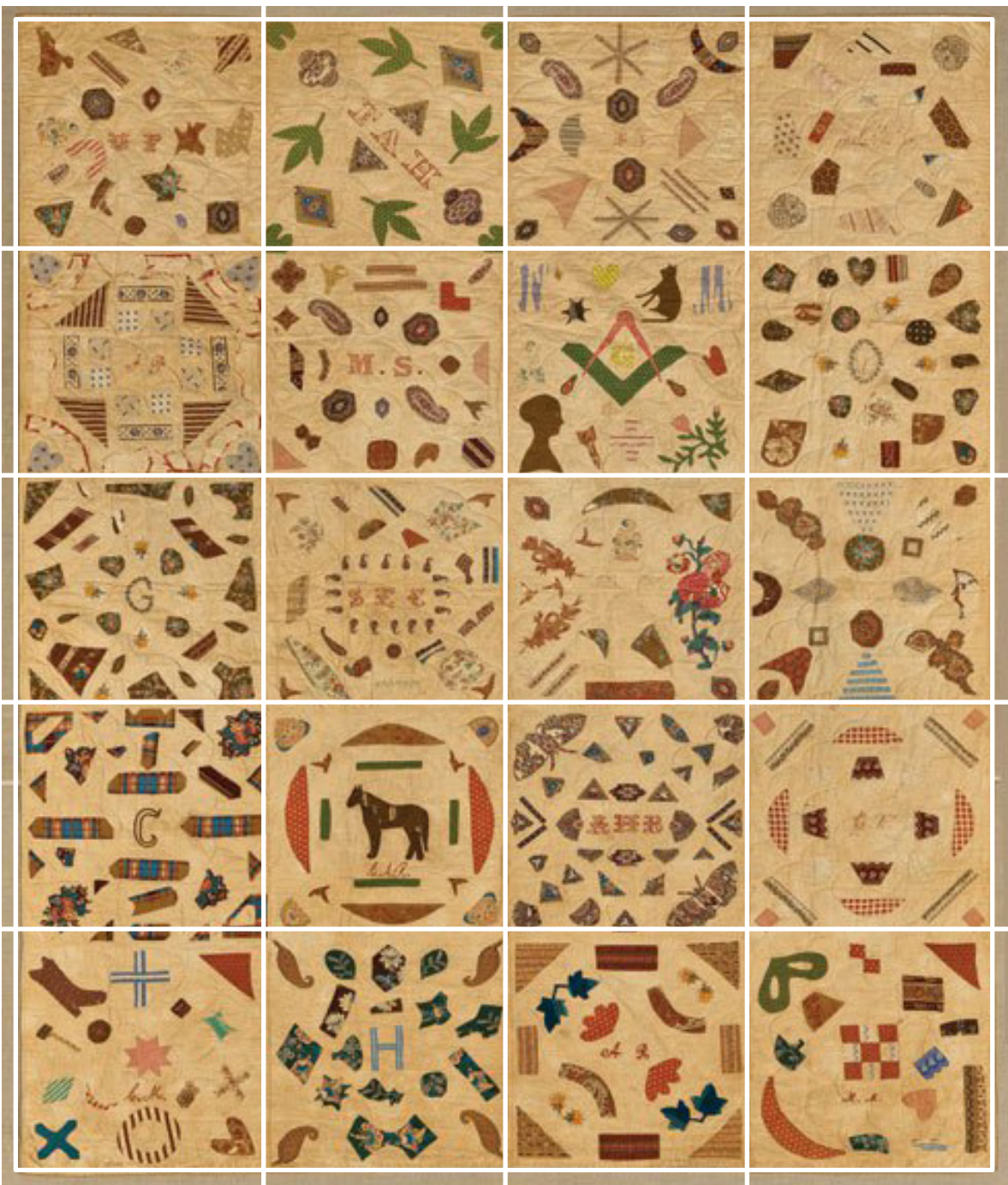
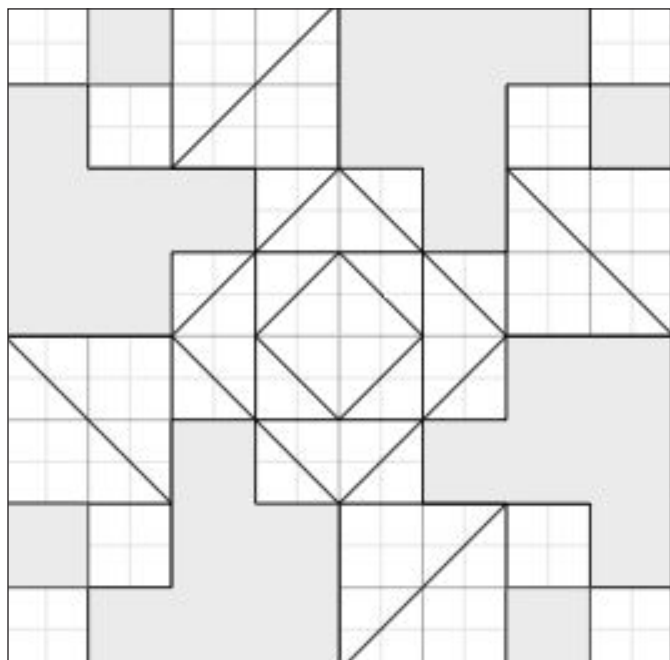
ABOVE
Pictorial Quilt, Circa 1840, Brooklyn Museum.

Devising patchwork systems.

An excerpt from ‘Workt by Hand’: Hidden Labor and Historical Quilts, an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum.

“...While quilts may seem evocative of a shared heritage, these stories are shaped by larger, often assimilationist cultural forces in which quilts serve as evidence of a uniform and mythic national past—in which history has been reduced, modified, or reimagined...historical quilts actually functioned: as both a creative outlet and as a repository of cultural history for various communities...”

A.



ABOVE
Pictorial Quilt, Circa 1840, Brooklyn Museum.

Devising patchwork systems.

In taking inspiration from quilt compositions when conceptualizing the icons and interface, I eventually felt like I was starting to reinforce some groundwork back into my ideas. In fact, I didn't realize how much planning goes into each fabric work of art. The idea of the grid also seemed to coalesce with the nature of the New York city grid and the buildings that are its physical manifestations. Therefore, I also decided to carry on this framework into my interface which will be shown later in this document.

B.

Brainstorming the Interface: An expanded grid and field.

By nature, a quilt is an assembly of an array of grids in order to form a larger composition. Similarly, I have decided to structure the process of my website with two steps in mind. First, I would need to determine how exactly a single grid composition would look like. Or in other words, what pieces of information would take up what portion of this ‘starter’ grid. Next, I would need to determine how a series of these single grids would fit as a whole. Under this frame of mind, the idea of expansion of the screen could be a way to illustrate the growth of space. So, for this brainstorming process I have decided to experiment with this notion and see how best to incorporate it to bridge the gap between the two stages.

BELOW
Pictorial Quilt, Circa 1840, Brooklyn Museum.



B.

The Single Grid: A run through in organizational parameters.

The process of a complete run through of the single grid is meant to be read as follows:

1. What is the status of the space? Is it empty, occupied, or under construction?
2. How is it used? Is it a residential or commercial space?
3. To what extent is the scale of the space? Is the space primarily retail focused or manufacturing focused?
4. If the space were to be classified further, who would it be? What characteristics set the space apart? (In adjectives?)

B.

BUILDING STATUS

EMPTY

OCCUPIED

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

BUILDING PURPOSE

RESIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

LEGAL & FINANCIAL

INDUSTRIAL

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT-OWNED

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL

SUPPLY & WHOLESALE

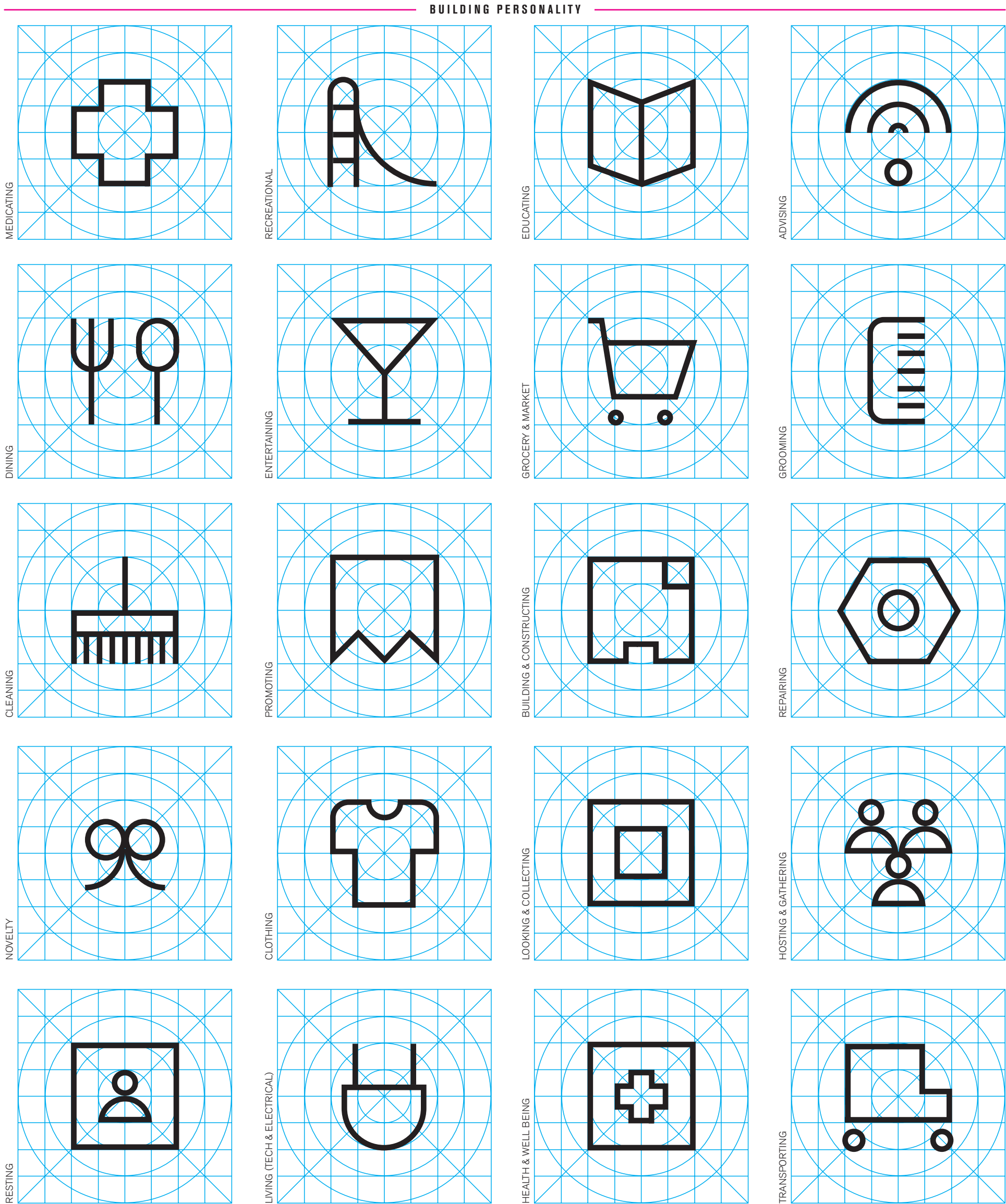
SERVICES

RETAIL

MANUFACTURING

ABOVE
Alternative Icon Sketches, ‘Borrowed from Chinatown’
Using the grid for the NYC Logo to jumpstart alphabet construction.

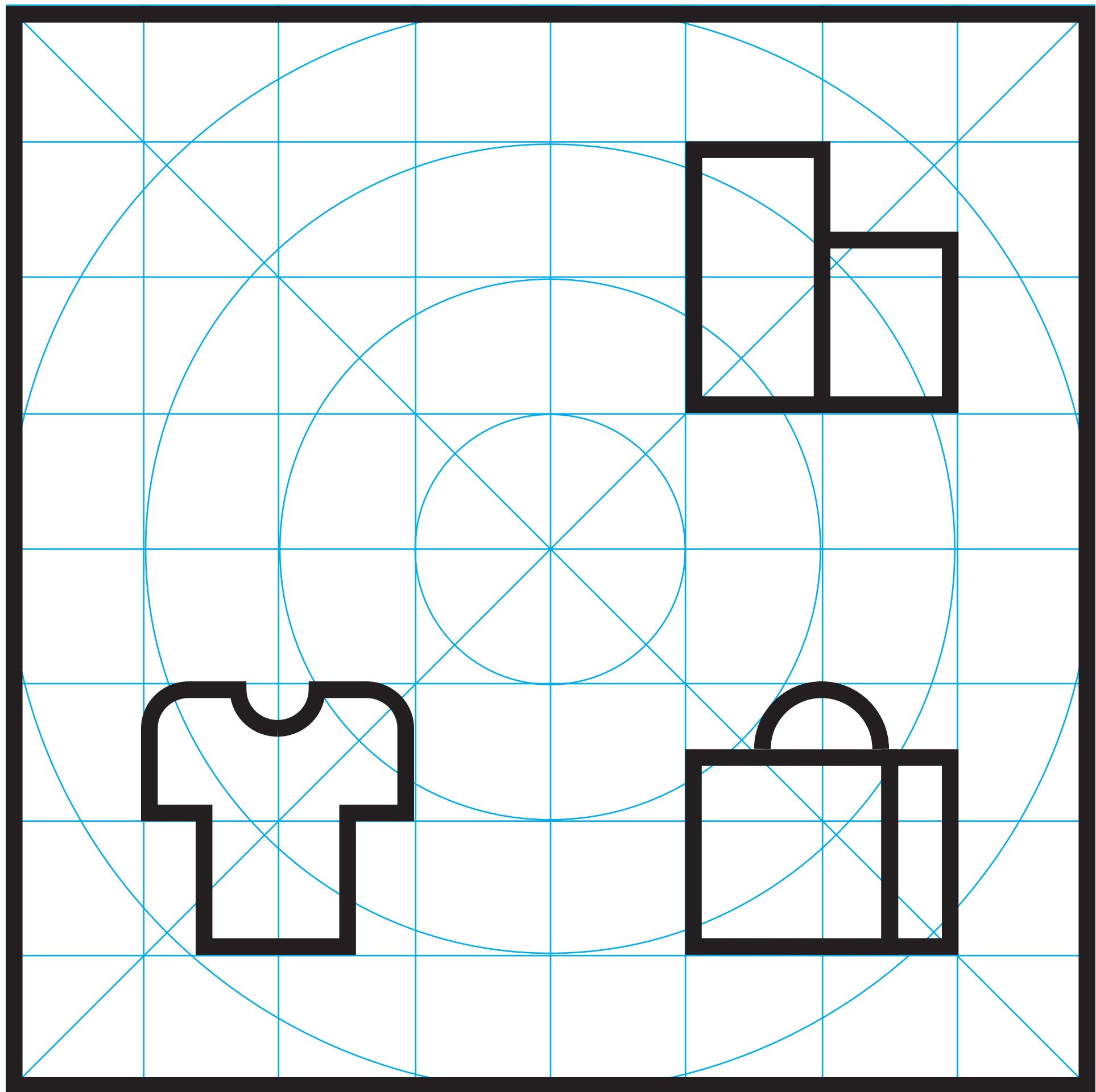
B.



ABOVE
Alternative Icon Sketches, ‘Borrowed from Chinatown’
Using the grid for the NYC Logo to jumpstart alphabet construction.

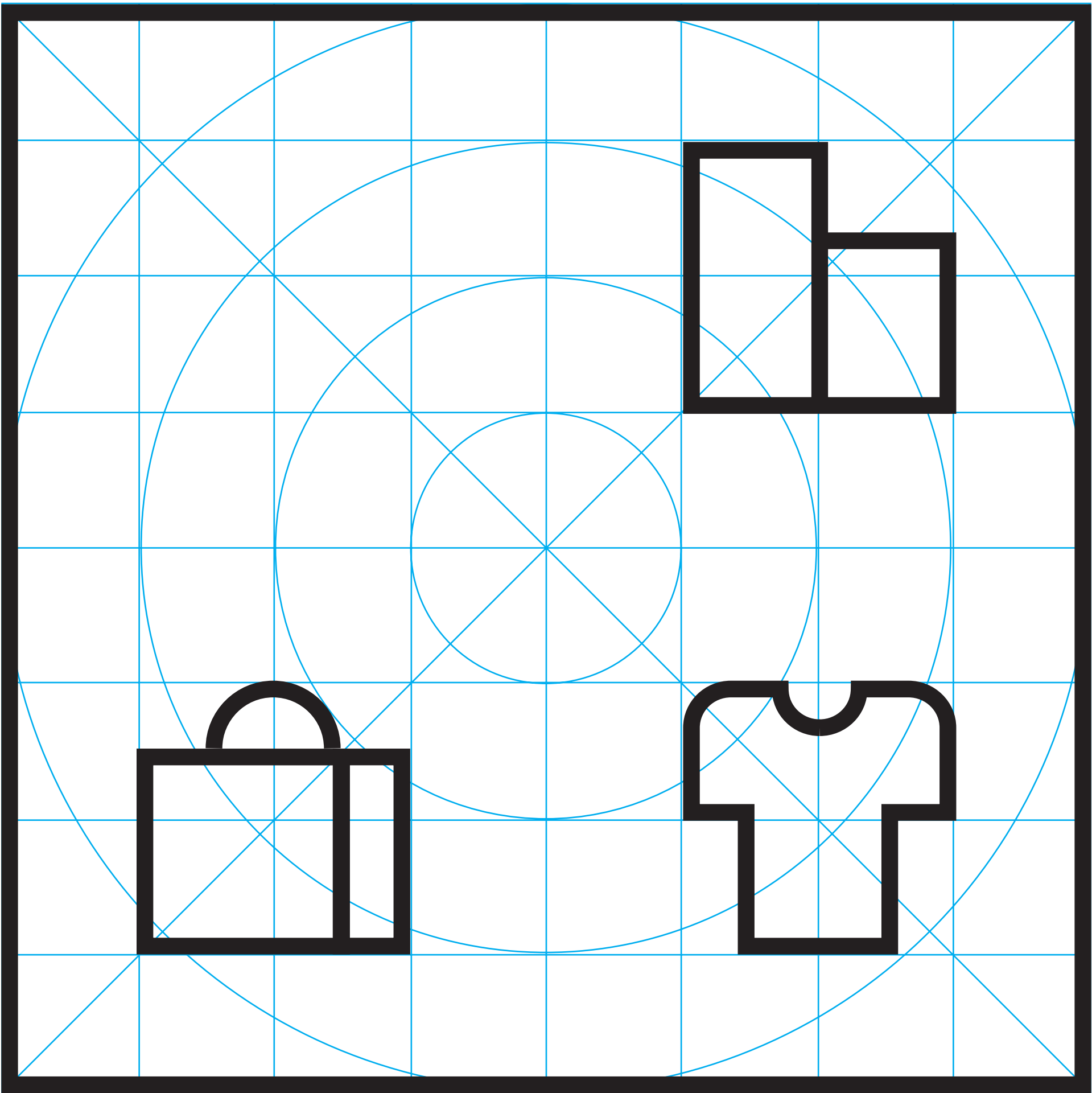
B.

*The Single Grid: A run through in
organizational parameters. [1]*



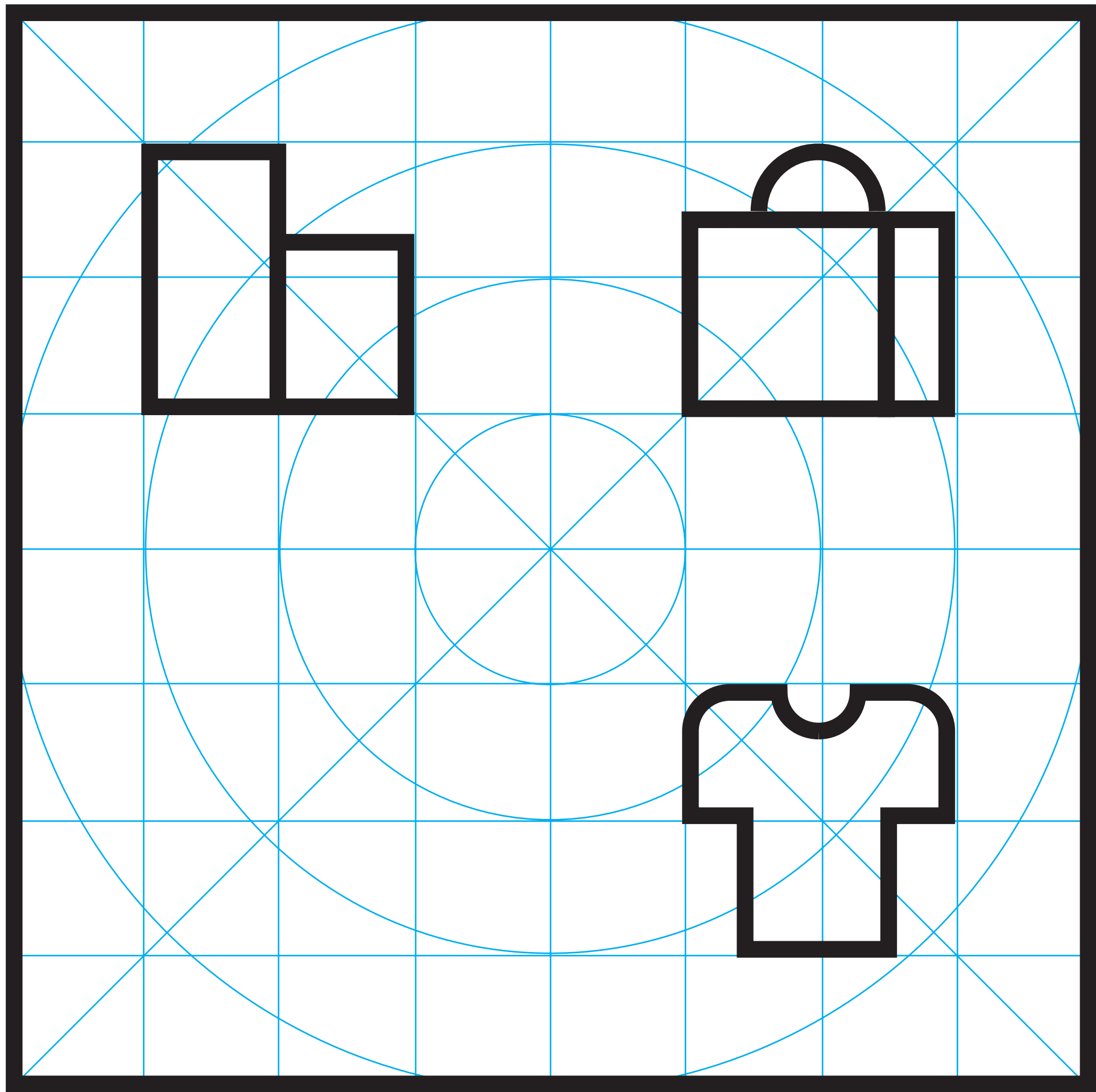
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*The Single Grid: A run through in
organizational parameters. [2]*



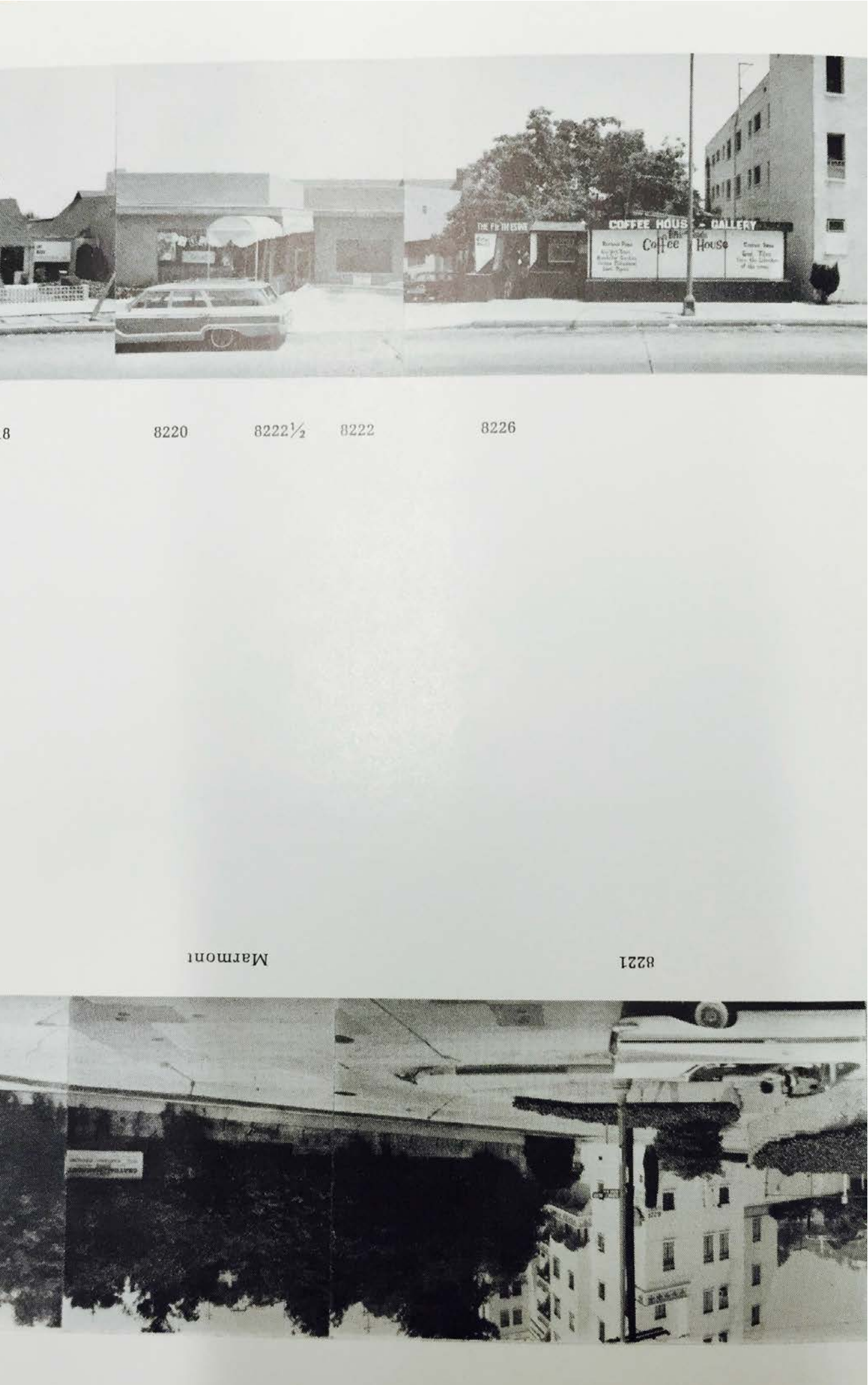
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*The Single Grid: A run through in
organizational parameters. [3]*



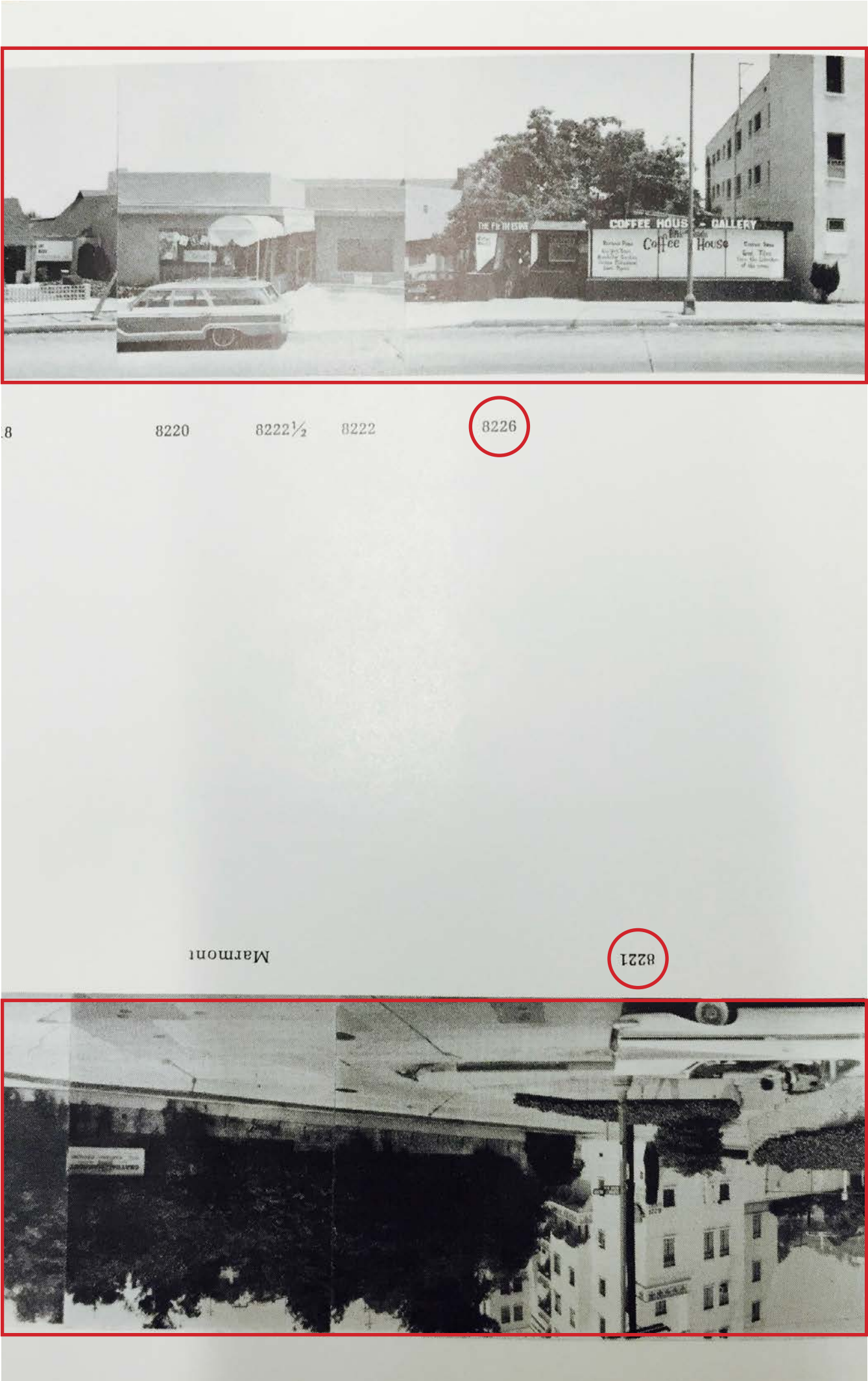
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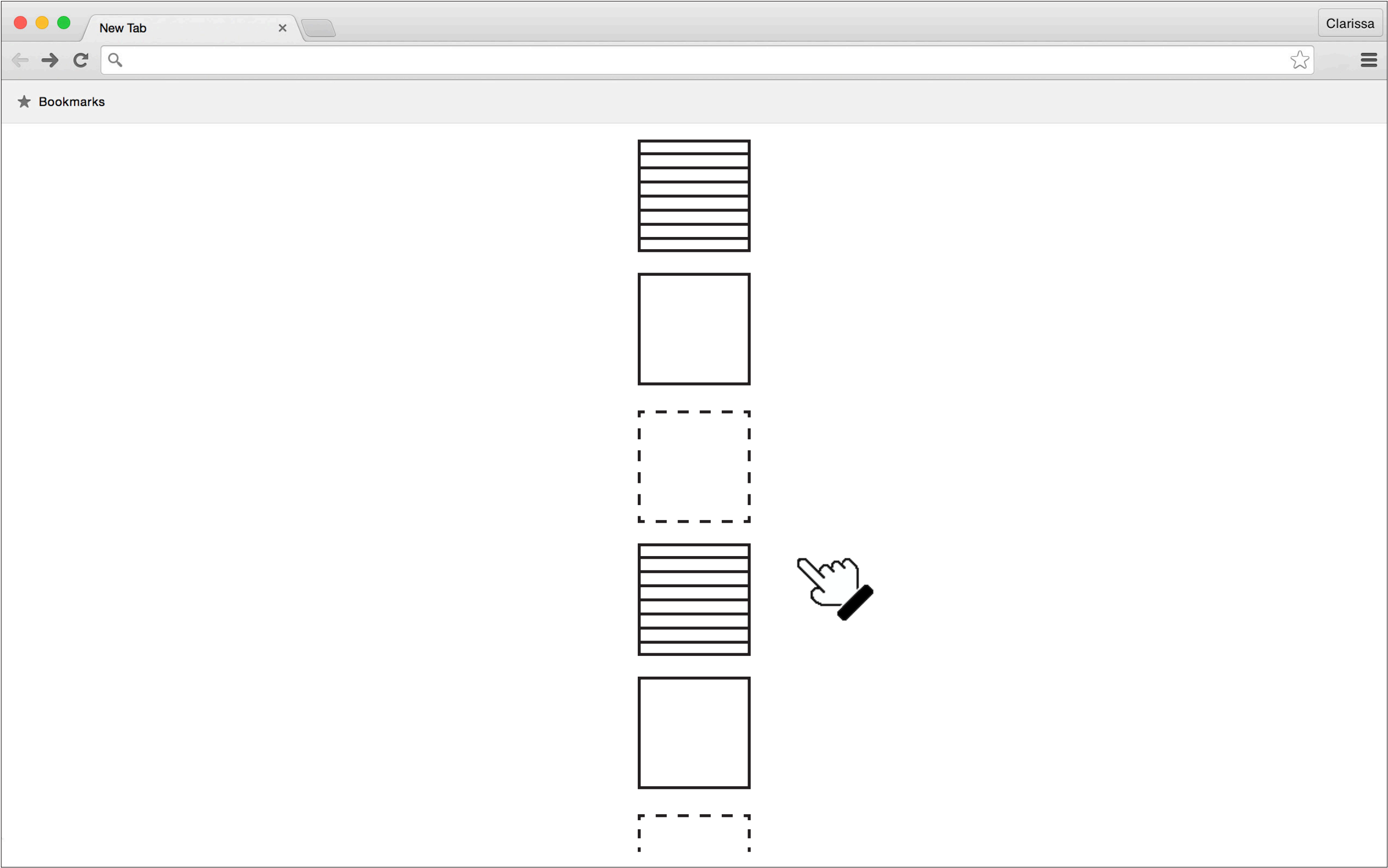
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Ed Ruscha.*

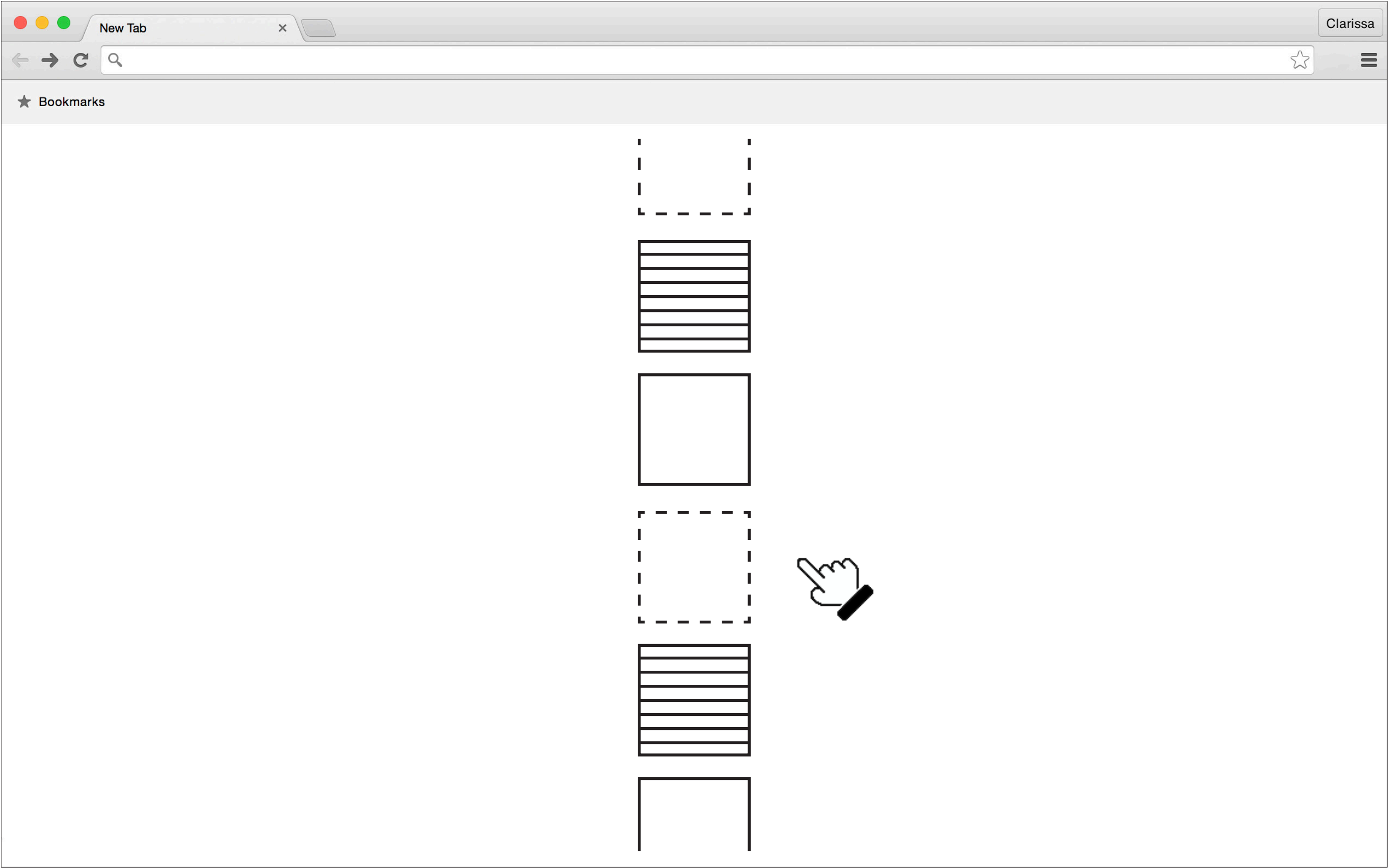


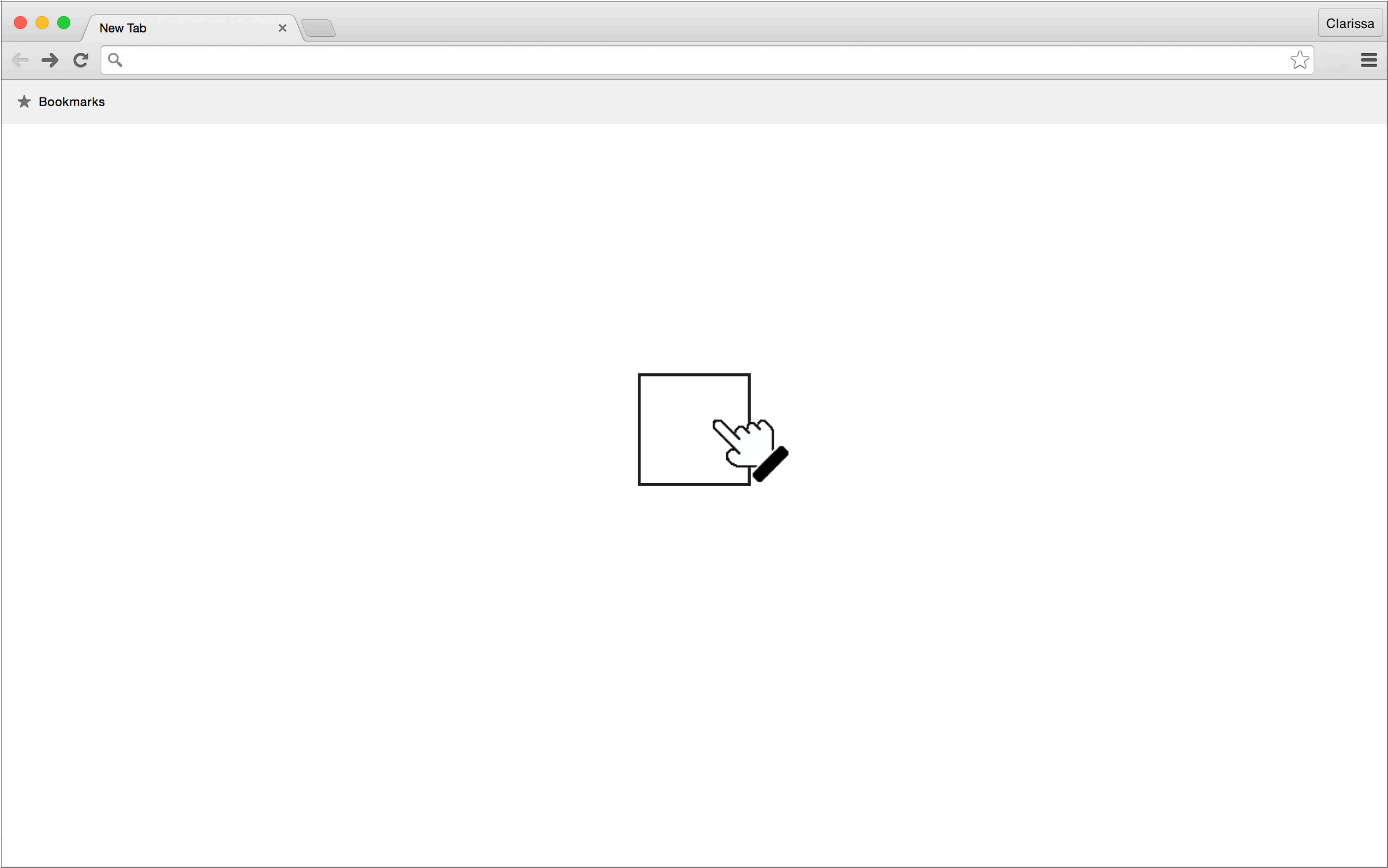
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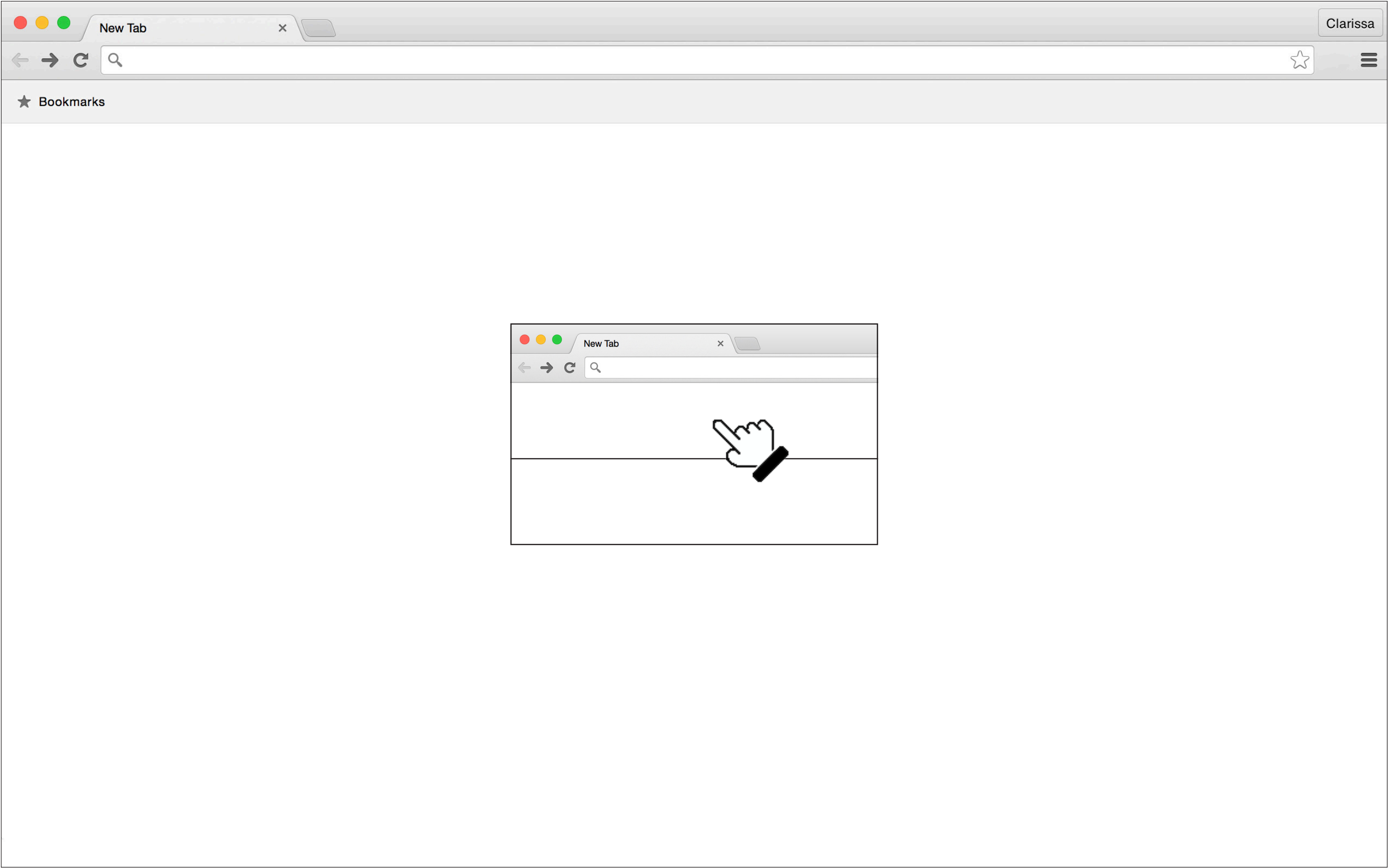
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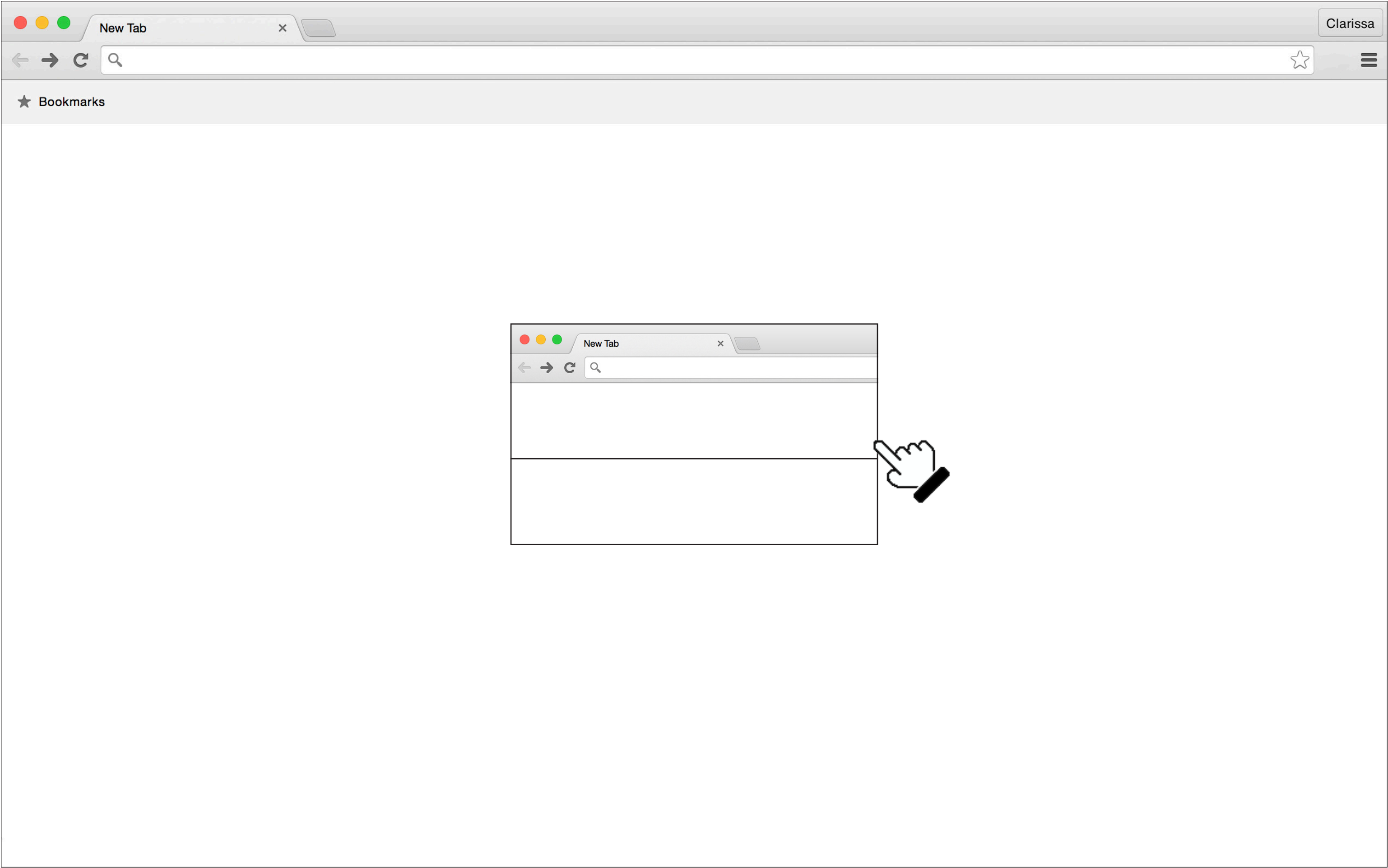


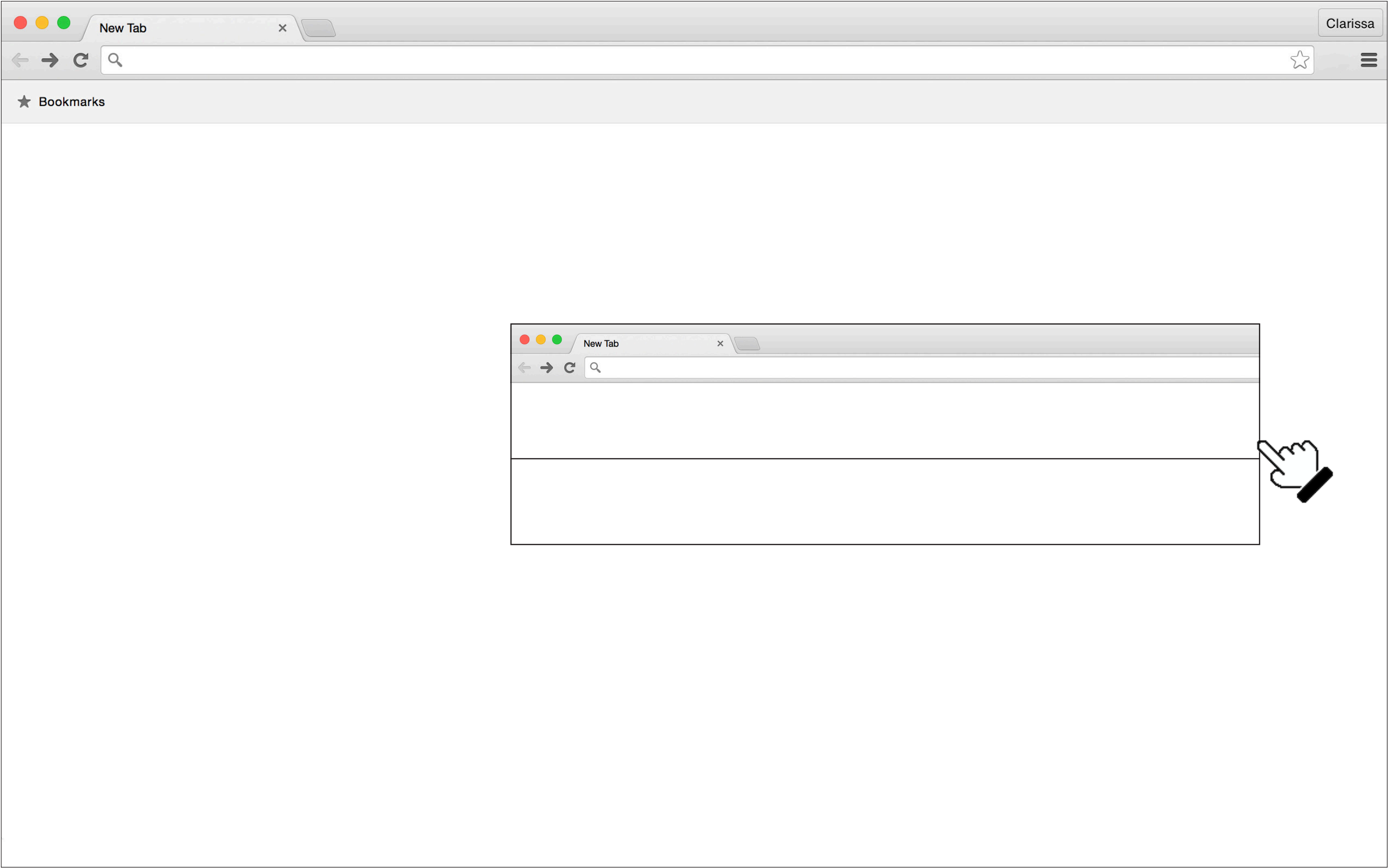


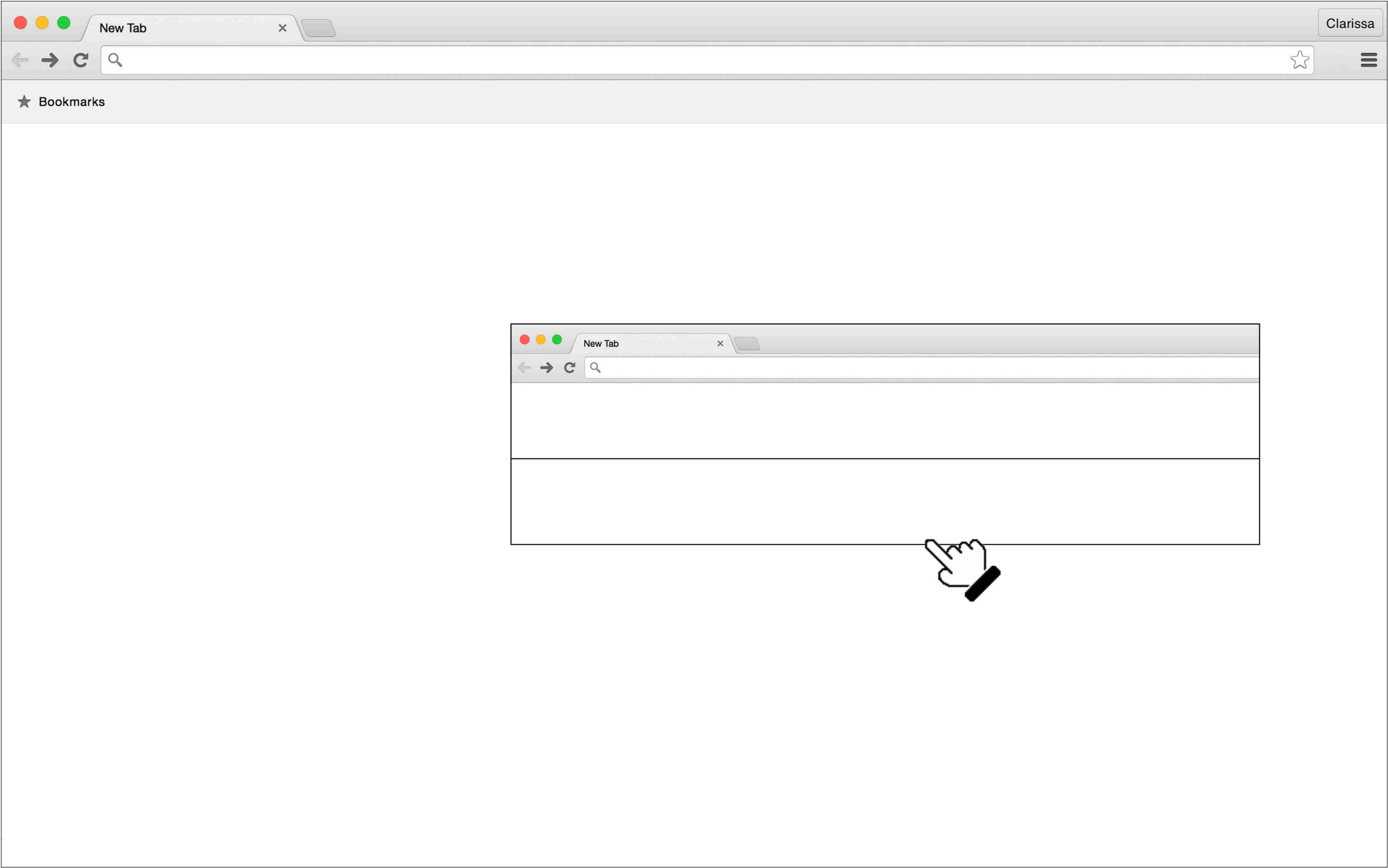


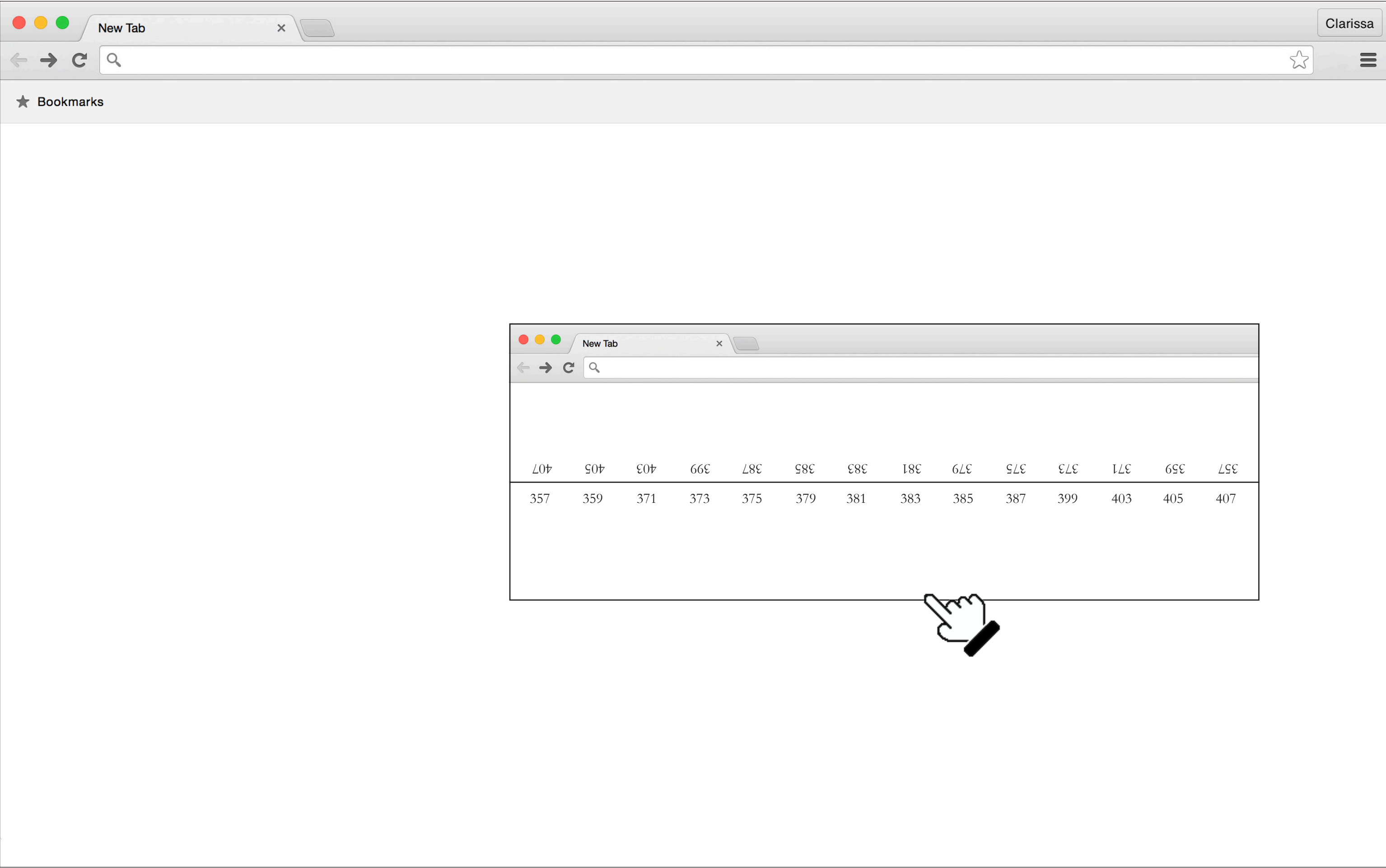






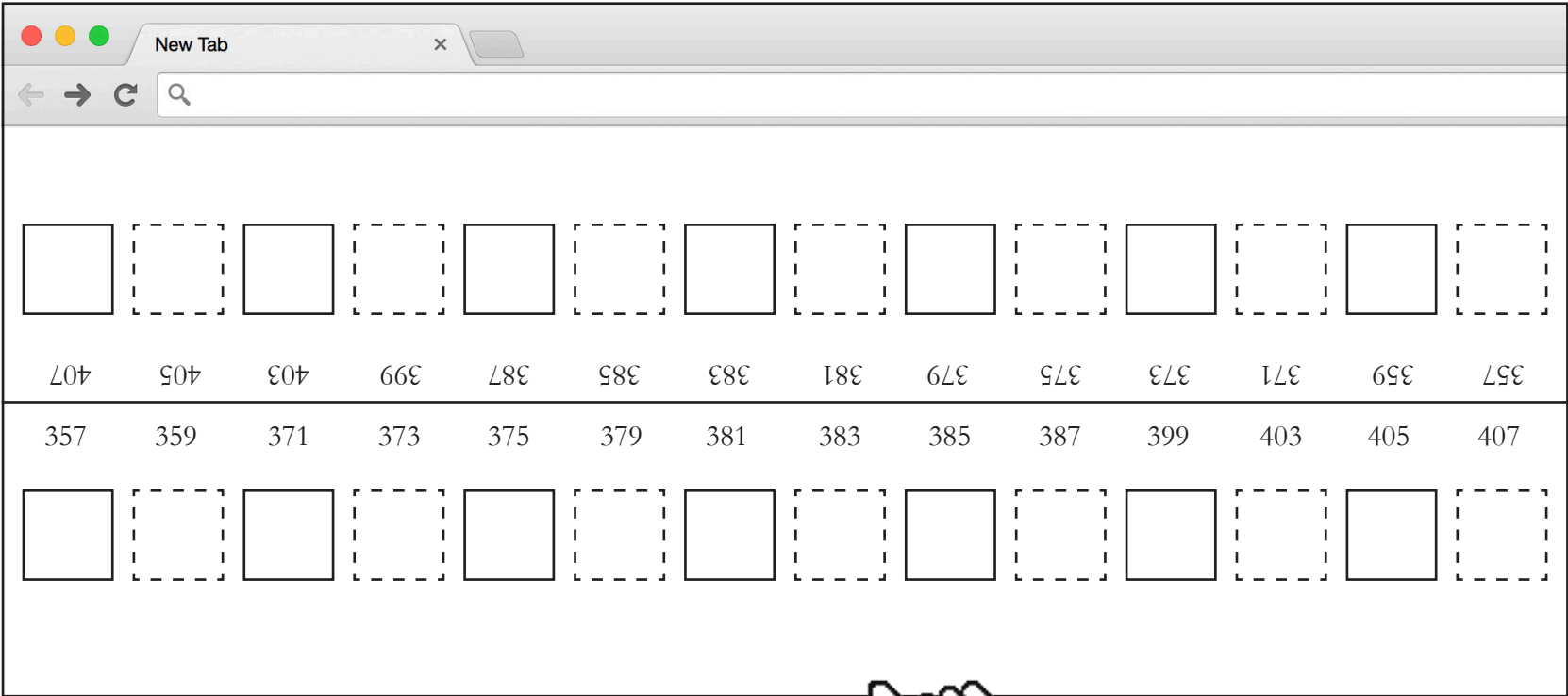


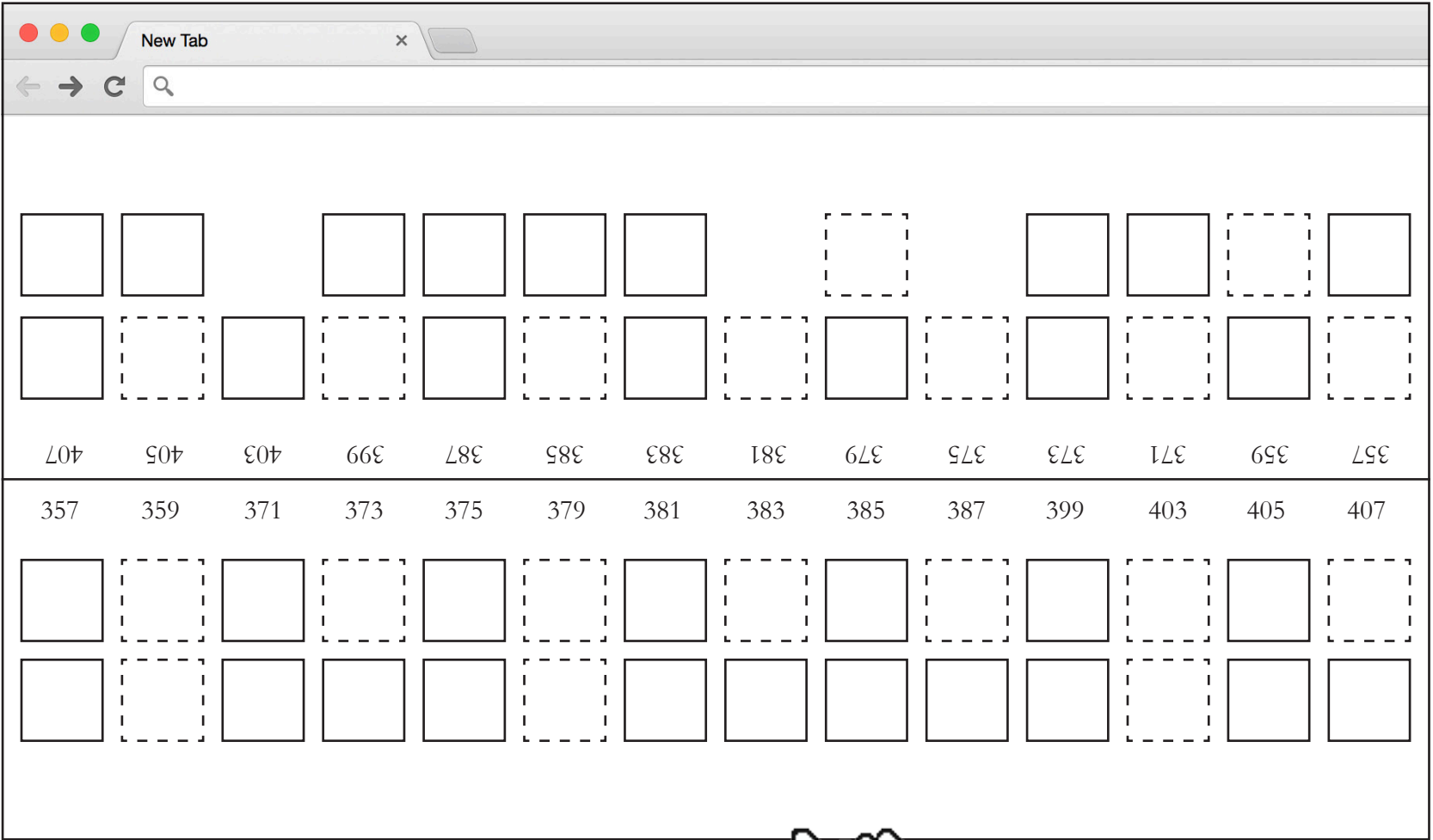


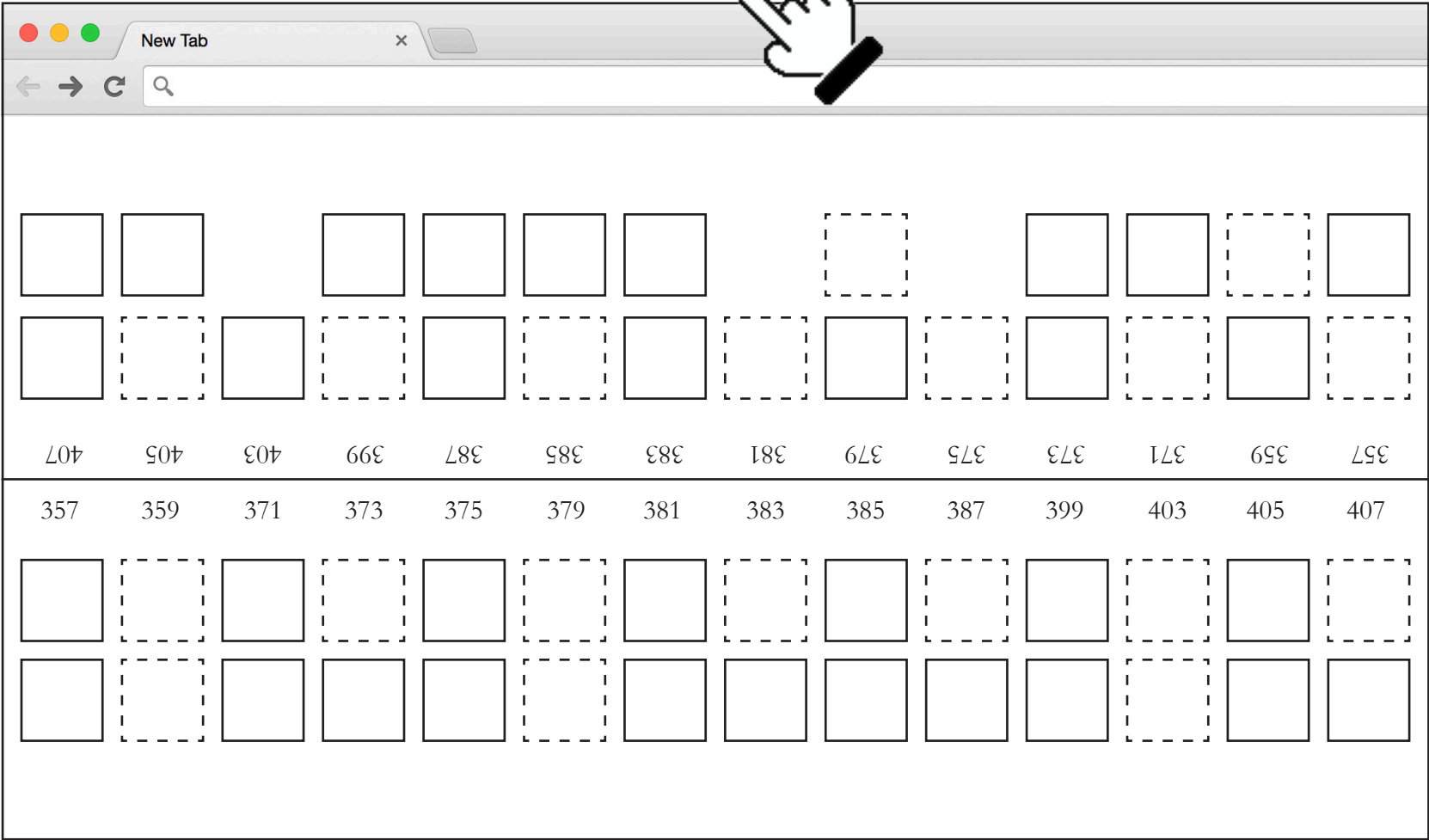


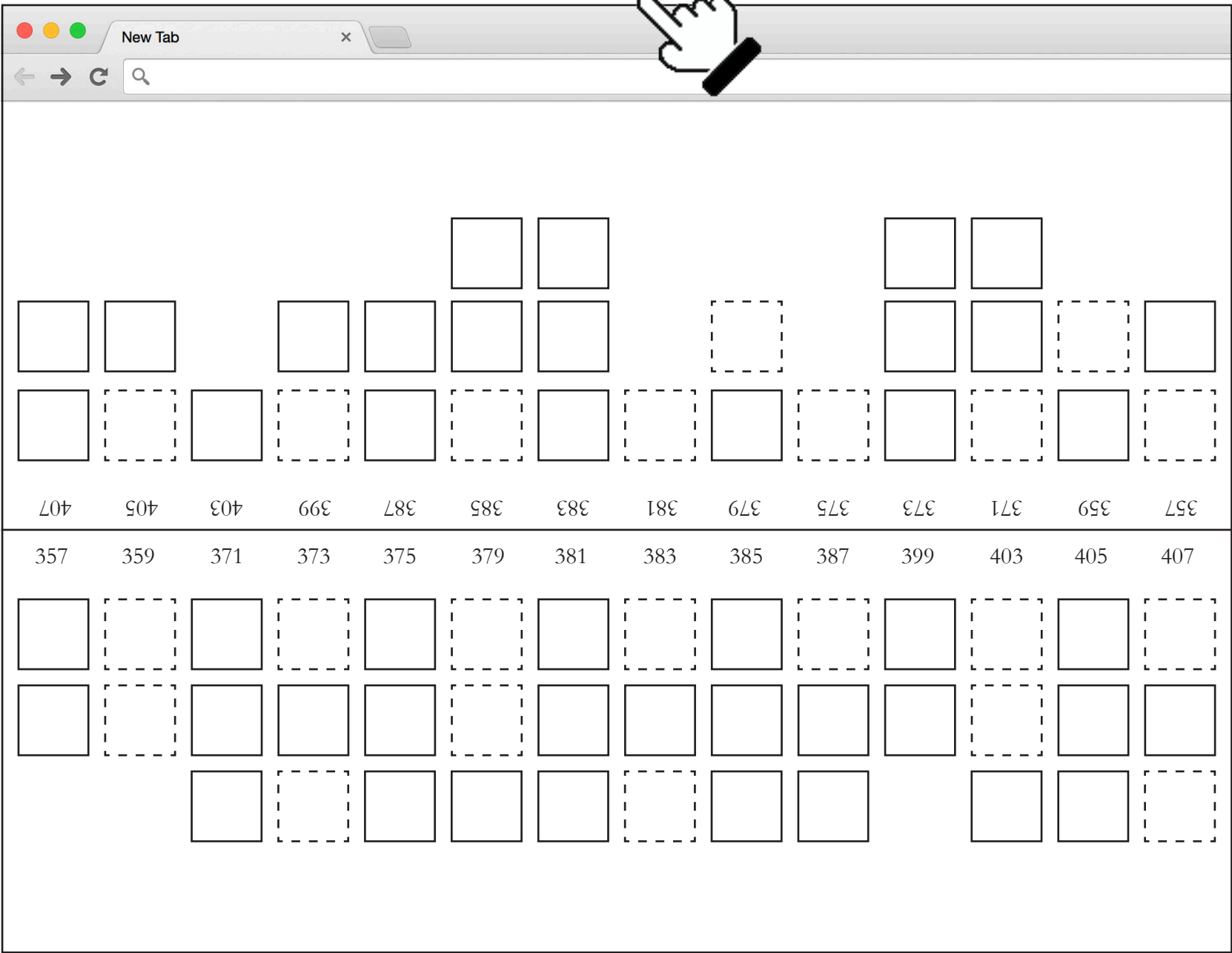
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407	405	403	371	375	379	381	383	385	387	399	403	405	407

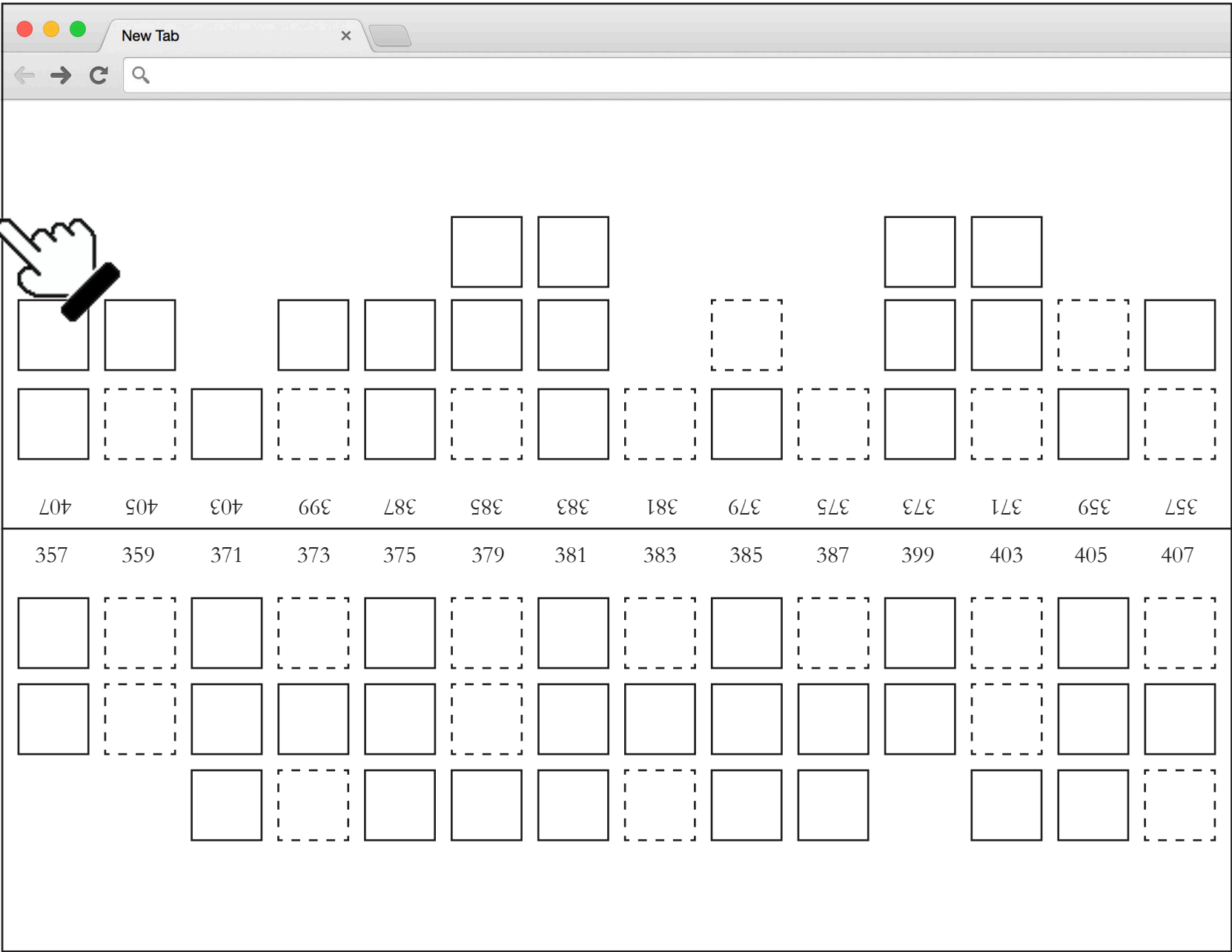


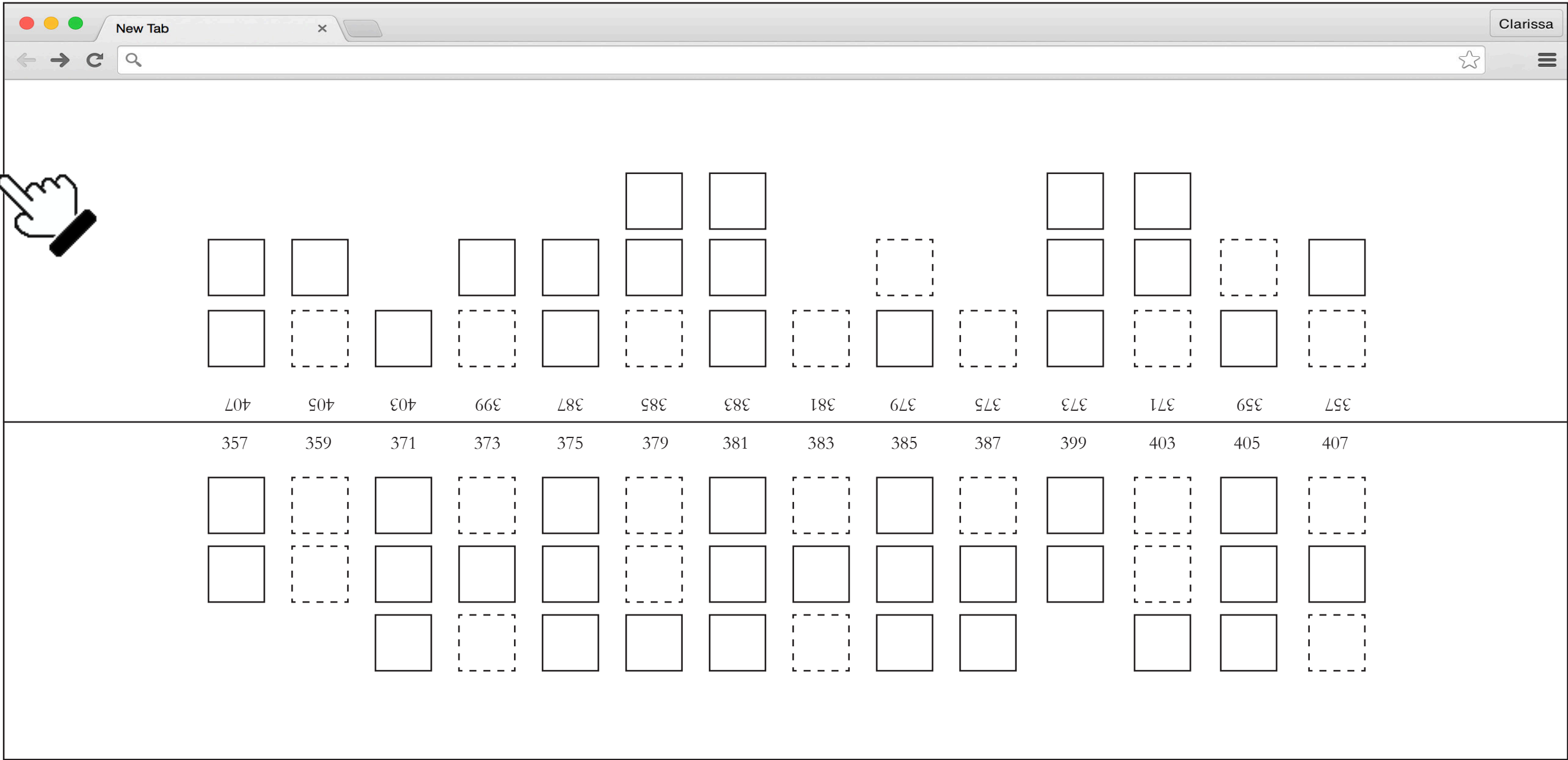


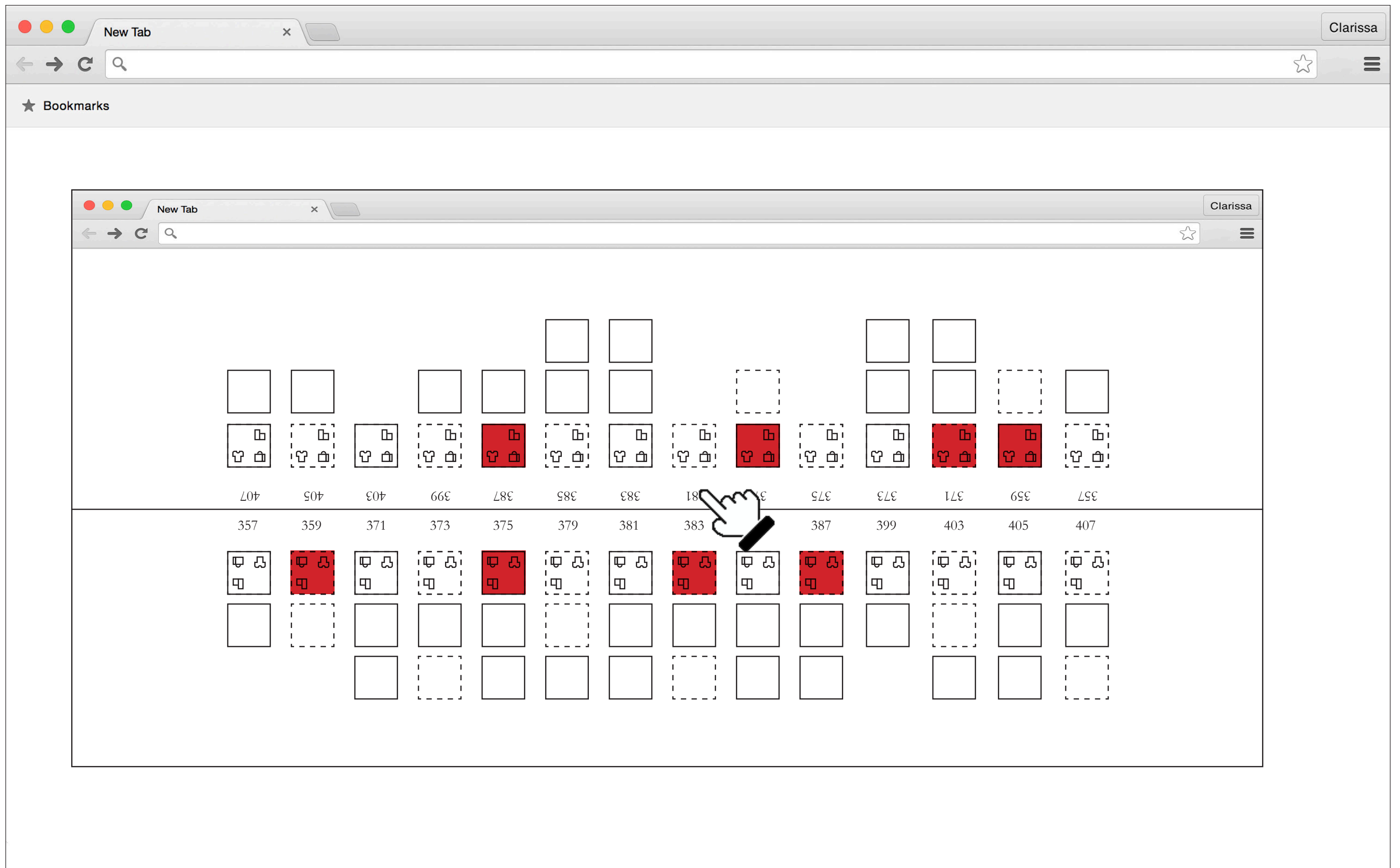


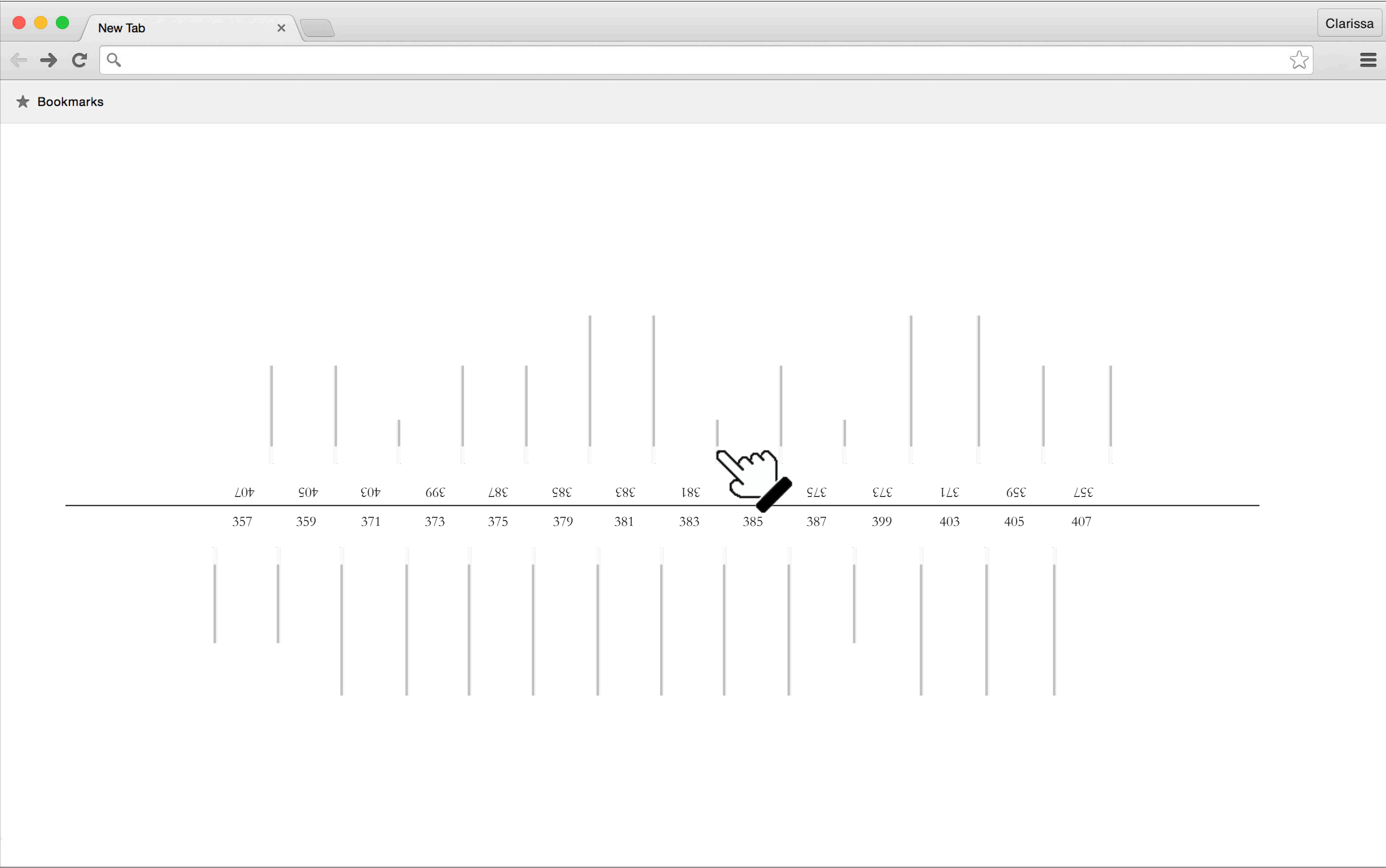






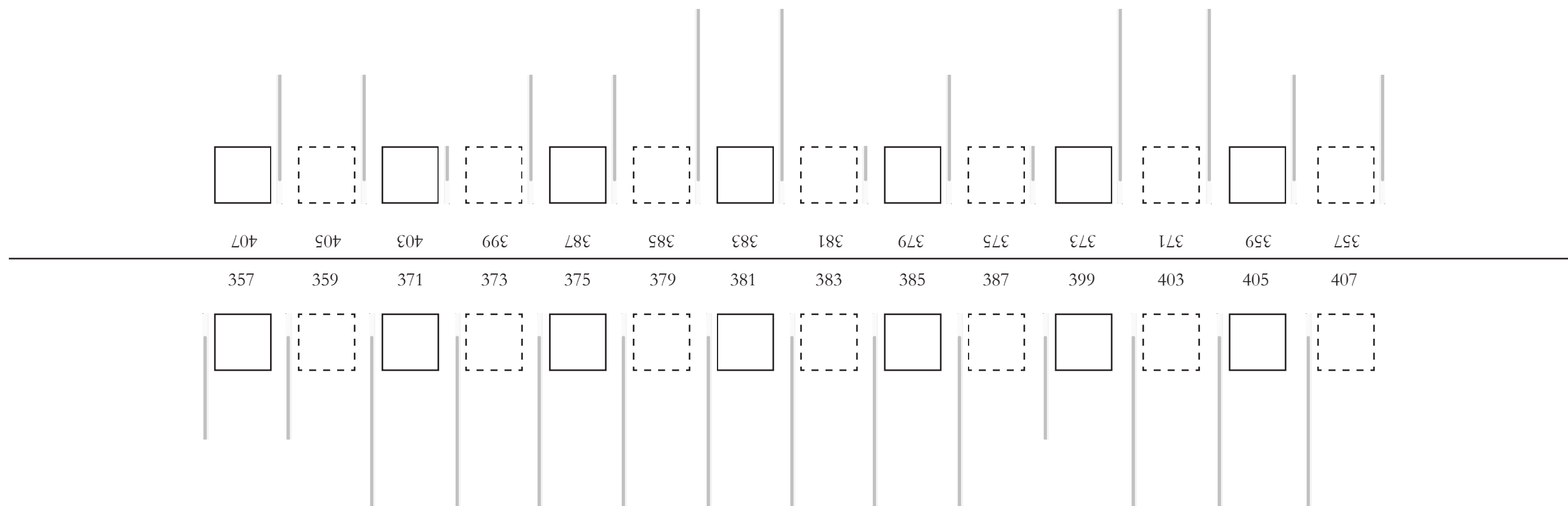






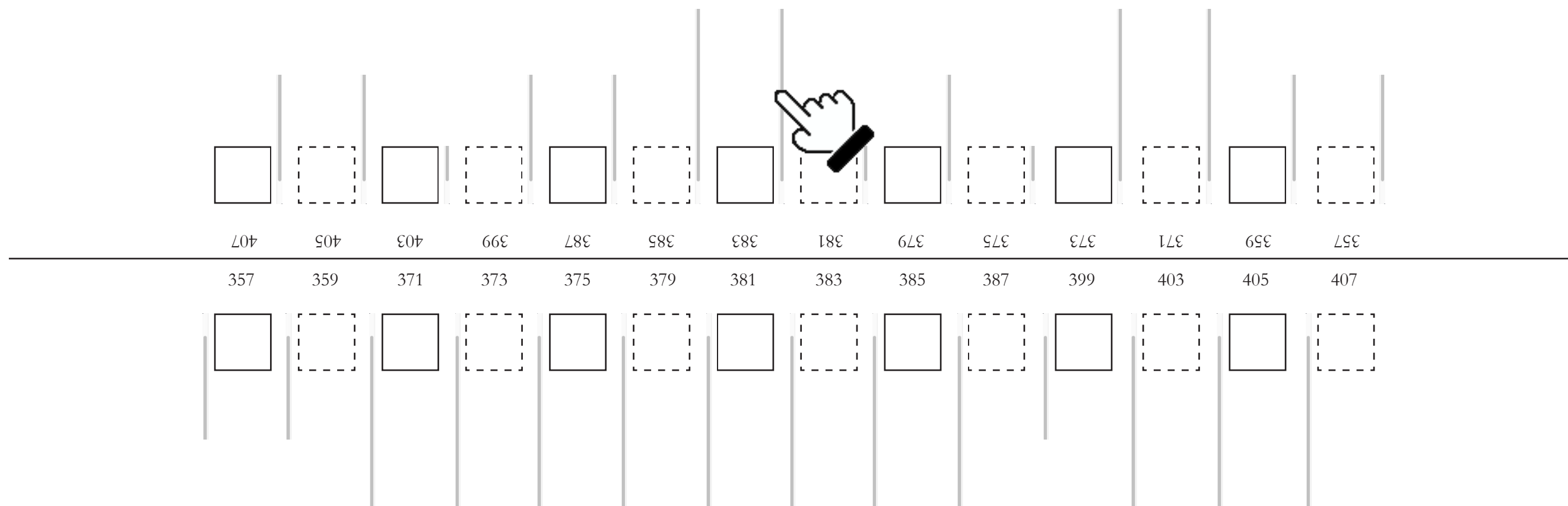


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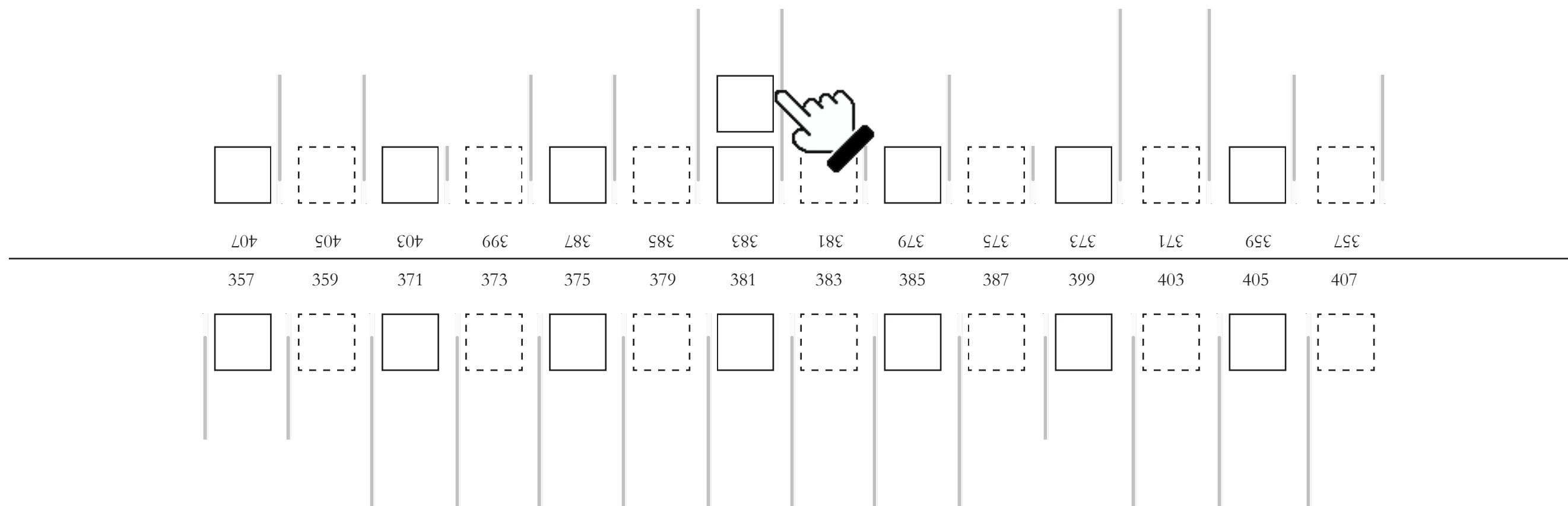


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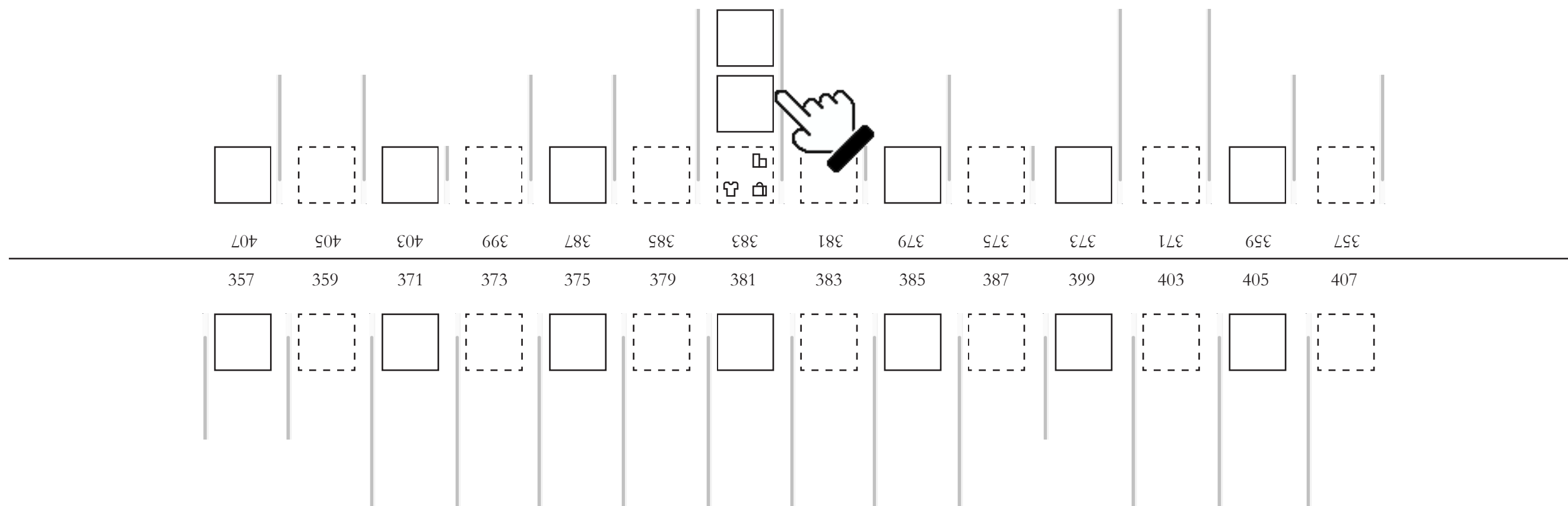


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★ Bookmarks





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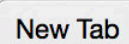
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Category 2	407	405	403	399	387	385	381	383	375	373	371	359	357



★ Bookmarks

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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357	359	371	373	375	379	381	383	385	387	399	403	405	407



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Clarissa



★ Bookmarks

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★ Bookmarks

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★ Bookmarks

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357	356	371	373	375	379	381	383	385	387	399	403	405	407



★ Bookmarks

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C.

Chinatown Case Study: Orchard Street.

Known historically as a Jewish neighborhood, Orchard Street has gone through a rapid series of changes that may classify the area as a highly gentrified one. The portion of the street that exists in Chinatown is particularly home to a large number of galleries which are in fact frequently facing one another. Because of this, foot traffic particularly by the area’s locale is quite low. This area may be interesting to juxtapose with Eldridge Street which is less gentrified in comparison.

BELOW
An image capture from Google Maps

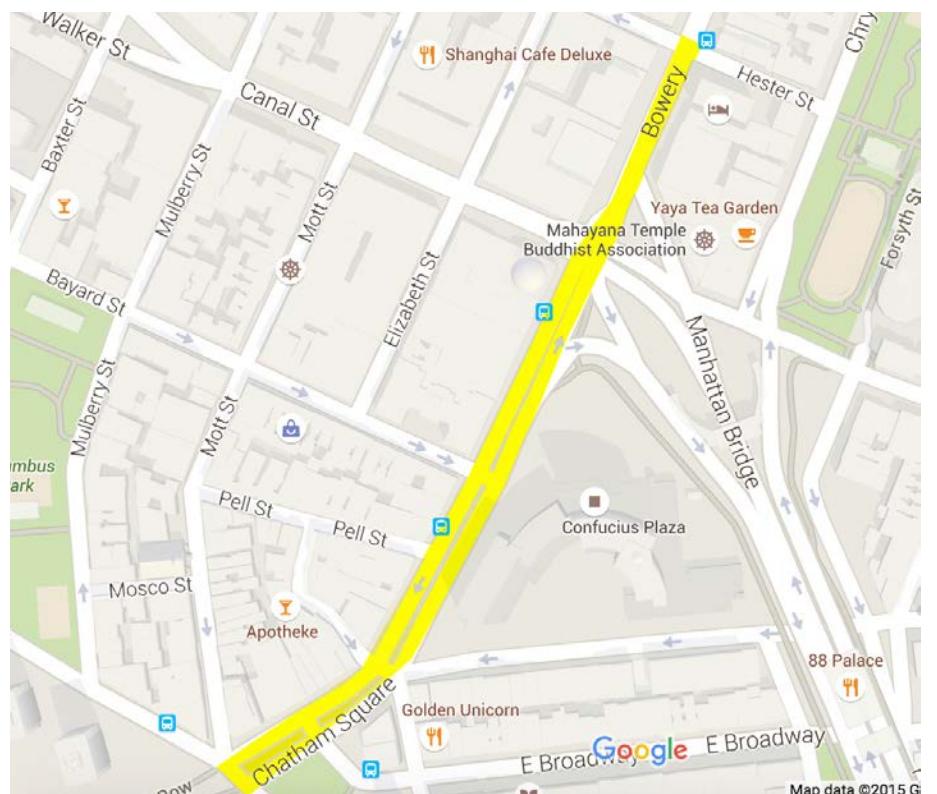


C.

Chinatown Case Study: The Bowery.

As a main street, the Bowery runs through the heart of Chinatown and all the way up to Astor Place in East Village. The area carries a large amount of traffic compared to both Orchard and Eldridge, containing a mix between the Chinatown locale (Chinese and Non-Chinese), foreign tourists, and neighboring residents from other boroughs. The Bowery has also gone through a fair amount of gentrification in the form of new high-rise towers and boutiques that frame the area.

BELOW
An image capture from Google Maps



C.

Chinatown Case Study: Eldridge Street.

Also previously a Jewish neighborhood, Eldridge Street is dramatically different now from its past. However, its difference exists in the fact that the area is now occupied with a large majority of the Chinatown locale. In an on-site visit to the area, one can observe that many of the commercial signs exist in both Chinese and English. Moreover one can also notice that the high amount of foot traffic in the area comprise mostly of the locale with tourists particularly occupying the intersection between Eldridge and Division.

BELOW
An image capture from Google Maps

