



Theatre Company DOOD PAARD plays
WOMEN IN TROY as told by our Mothers

WOMEN IN TROY AS TOLD BY OUR MOTHERS

Portuguese theatre director and playwright Tiago Rodrigues wrote the script for *Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers*, a new play for Dood Paard. This mythical story about the besieged city of Troy is told from the perspective of women – specifically the perspective of our mothers. Present and past interweave, the personal and the mythical merge, heroes become monsters, victims become perpetrators, and ultimately the chorus takes the lead.

The historical record is re-examined with a feminist gaze.

When mothers get to do the talking, what story will they tell? What's their take on this never-ending, pointless war? What roles are assigned to them, and what roles would they rather take? We share in the ambitions and visions, fears and yearnings, frustration and rage of Helen, Hecuba, Cassandra, and Andromache.

We should all be feminists

This play arose out of a collective process and was written by a man. But can a man write a feminist piece? Should such a thing even be allowed? Or is this precisely what's needed to bring a turnaround in our thinking?

Crochet

As well as being a reference to mythology, the crochet work that takes place in the play reflects the long tradition of crafting as a form of protest. Over the centuries, textile has remained an accessible medium for women who have used it to express their creativity and frustration. And it is precisely because it was seen as 'women's work' for so long that it can now serve as the ideal material for commenting on the role of women in society.

Playwright Tiago Rodrigues

Tiago Rodrigues rewrites classics, adapts novels and combines true stories with fiction. For *Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers* he drew on various versions of the Troy myth, as well as recent world events and personal experiences from his own life and those of theatre makers and cast members Alesya Andrushevskaya, Manja Topper, Kuno Bakker, Tomer Pawlicki.

Dood Paard and Tiago Rodrigues previously worked together on the 2011 play *The Jew*, an adaptation of *The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlowe at Teatro Maria Matos in Lisbon.

Credits

by/with Tiago Rodrigues, Alesya Andrushevskaya, Manja Topper, Kuno Bakker, Tomer Pawlicki, Michael Yallop, Doris de Bruijn and Ramses van den Hurk

Photography by Sanne Peper

*WOMEN IN TROY AS TOLD BY
OUR MOTHERS IS A
PRODUCTION BY DOOD PAARD*

Dood Paard makes implicit and explicit political theatre. The performances are the result of a collective work process. The design, the translation, the directing, the dramaturgy is a collective process. The organization works as a collective. Dood Paard's work is diverse: location theatre, text theatre, music theatre, youth theatre, pop-up theater and a combination of these types. Dood Paard also likes to rub shoulders with the visual arts and music.

When you go to Dood Paard you never really know what to expect. A performance is never an end product, but remains in motion. Dood Paard is in a constant state of flux. Dood Paard has been reinventing itself for years.



DOOD PAARD

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PLAYDATES IN THE NETHERLANDS



PERFORMANCE DATES IN THE NETHERLANDS

OKTOBER '22

18	Frascati, Amsterdam	20h30
19	Frascati, Amsterdam	20h30
20	(premiere) Frascati, Amsterdam	20h30
21	Frascati, Amsterdam	20h30
22	Frascati, Amsterdam	20h30

NOVEMBER '22

5	Corrosia, Almere	20u15
22	Theater aan het Vrijthof, Maastricht	20u30
23	Junushoff, Wageningen	20u30
26	Theater Rotterdam, Rotterdam	20u15
30	Schuur, Haarlem	20u00

DECEMBER '22

1	Mimik, Deventer	20u30
3	Theater De Verbeelding, Purmerend	20u00
7	Musis & Stadstheater, Arnhem	20u30
9	Theater Kikker, Utrecht	20u00
10	Theater Kikker, Utrecht	20u00
13	De Nieuwe Vorst, Tilburg	20u30
14	Schouwburg Amstelveen	20u30
15	Theater Ins Blau, Leiden	20u30
16	De Lieve Vrouw, Amersfoort	20u30
17	Lux, Nijmegen	20u30

FEBRUARY '23

16	Frascati, Amsterdam	20u30
17	Frascati, Amsterdam	20u30
18.	Frascati, Amsterdam	20u30



REVIEWS & INTERVIEWS

The Trojan War from the perspective of mothers

In Women in Troy, the cast crochet a large bedspread together

Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers. Dood Paard (English, with Dutch subtitles).

Reviewed performance: 21/10/2022, Frascati Theatre, Amsterdam.

More information at www.doodpaard.nl

Stories from history are mostly passed on by men. We have Homer to thank for etching the Trojan War in our collective memory as a tale of heroes who gave their lives on the battlefield. But, for a change, how about considering this war from the perspective of a Trojan woman, a woman who gives birth to a daughter just as war breaks out. When Troy is captured ten years later, her daughter is taken and raped in front of her. Could this be said to mark the end of the war?

Dood Paard theatre collective have subjected Homer's Iliad to a thoroughly intriguing reinterpretation, through the eyes of their own mothers. What do their mothers see when they read about this bloody war? The cast members either talked with their mothers or imagined what their deceased mothers would have said. Tiago Rodrigues took these accounts as the basis for an intelligent play script.

On stage we see the actors Tomer Pawlicki, Alesya Andrushevskaya, Manja Topper and Kuno Bakker seated in a row, crocheting a large bedspread together, in a silent but vivid expression of protest. From this understated setting, they talk to us about their mothers and speak from their mother's perspective. Pawlicki decided to re-read the Iliad together with his mother, and in that period he saw scenes on television of Ukrainian families separating at train stations. She recognised in them the figure of Andromache, who is separated from her husband Hector when he goes to battle – and murdered by Achilles. 'The things Homer wrote about are still happening,' says Pawlicki, 'So what has humanity been doing for the past 3,000 years?'

Pawlicki and his mother decided to give Andromache a voice, a raging and loving cry from the heart: 'If I belong with you,' she declares, 'then you belong with me.' It's possible that Andromache really did say something like this, says Pawlicki. His mother says: 'She probably did, but the man who was writing it all down wasn't paying attention.'

It's an intriguing point that the mothers are of course equally influenced by the prevailing male narrative, and what's more their viewpoints were chronicled by a man. In questioning their own premise so explicitly in this way, Dood Paard at no point descend into oversimplification.

There unfolds a far richer vision on the Iliad that is as topical as it is universal. Cassandra, for example, was exceptional not because she could foretell the future – there were many others able to do that – but because she had the courage to speak out. That makes someone like Greta Thunberg a Cassandra too. And what of the notion that the war started over Helen? That's an iniquitous lie. Men started the war, and Helen's beauty at most gave them an excuse for unleashing their lust for violence. Women in Troy is no casual thought experiment. It is an examination of the prevailing male narrative, with its tendency to glorify violence and accord hero status to warriors. 'If the story of Troy had been told only by women for the last three thousand years, would war still happen today?'

Sander Janssens



22.10.2022

Go ask your mother

By Marijn Lems

Dood Paard theatre collective turned to their mothers for help for their new play. Their re-interpretation of Homer's Iliad has yielded a devastating and exquisite play about war, patriarchal oppression and the way we tell stories.

You might think Trojan War is a bit of a well-worn storyline. In the last year alone we've had two major stage productions based on the most famous war of literary history – one rather more

successful than the other. But even the most critically lauded of the two, [ITA's] Trojan Wars, left room for improvement when it came to the roles of women – in that regard it diverged very little from the passive supporting roles assigned to them by Homer and his contemporaries.

Dood Paard devised a plan to give Helena, Hecuba, Briseis, Andromache and Cassandra a tad more agency, by basing their new play on conversations with their mothers, and asking them how they perceived the female characters. Taking these exchanges as his source material, Tiago Rodrigues, who had worked with the group before, produced a devastatingly beautiful script that interrogates in various ways the patriarchal mode in which we tend to tell stories.

After the play's collective beginning, one by one Alesya Andrushevskaya, Tomer Pawlicki, Manja Topper and Kuno Bakker share their mother's standpoints with the audience, intertwining these personal recollections with literary analysis to make this fictional war palpable, and human. It is impossible to avoid drawing comparisons with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the presence onstage of Ukrainian actor Alesya Andrushevskaya only serves to underscore this.

Her mother does not refer literally to that war, however – Andrushevskya chooses instead to recall how when she was a child her mother would speak to her about the importance of words, saying ‘Words are our only hope when actions destroy the world as we know it. So speak out, my beauty. Become a woman who speaks.’ This poetic opening sets the tone for the stories of the other mothers, each with a distinctive point of view, and each with a distinctive character.

Pawlicki’s mother is initially hesitant to speak, for example, because she is ‘just not interested in dwelling on the past.’ She does agree, however, to read the Iliad with her son, like a kind of book club. This led to a trenchant rewriting of the role of Andromache, who furiously lashes out at Hector because he chooses war above her and their son. While Pawlicki takes notes, his mother says that’s exactly what Andromache did say, but the man who wrote it down didn’t listen to her properly.

It gradually becomes clear that the play’s central question is this: If all the stories we hear about war are told from a male perspective, what ideas about war are we perpetuating? Would world history have been any different if the female perspective had prevailed? The strength of the script lies, however, in the fact that this alternative perspective doesn’t go uninterrogated. Andromache’s position is also egocentric, after all, because if Hector doesn’t stay and resist the soldiers who are going to raze the city, those unable to flee will be utterly defenceless. The linking of this scene with the image of a Ukrainian soldier putting his family on a train serve to highlight the dilemma, given the mass graves and torture chambers now being found in regions that have been liberated from the Russians.

Another particularly satisfying aspect of the approach taken in Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers is the sense of love between mother and child that shines from each of the conversations. Bakker and Topper have both lost their mothers, and they each take their own slant on the concept: at odd moments Bakker is visited by his mother and is able to engage her in conversation after all, and in one particularly moving scene Topper simply gives an account of what her mother would have said. The conversations also evoke wonderful new perspectives – on Cassandra and her power as a woman trying to shield us from evil, and on women who harbour hatred for the enemy for the longest, because they can do nothing but bury their sons, fathers and loved ones.

The light touch of the actors as they tell their stories is disarming. Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers seamlessly merges subject and form as it tackles big themes without ever losing connection with the human impact.

Als jullie echt een man wilden, was
Euripides goed geweest



Parool

Trojan history from a female perspective: 'A story about war, but without the battles'

The new adaptation of the Iliad by Dood Paard theatre collective focuses on the women drawn into the conflict, rather than the familiar heroes of Ancient Greece.

'We have our mothers tell the stories of the women of Troy,' explain Dood Paard's Manja Topper and Kuno Bakker.

Wendy Lubberding

19 October 2022, 03:00

What kind of play is Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers?

Manja Topper (MT): The story of the Trojan War is one of Western literature's founding legends of people at war. It tells of how Helen, the stunningly beautiful wife of the king of one country is kidnapped by a prince from another country, and this leads to years of war. We tell the story of that war, but without the battles. We tell the back-story, the story of what war does to the people who, despite not being involved in the actual fighting, still have to deal with all its terrible consequences – in other words: the women.

History is mostly written by men, and the history of the Trojan War is no different. It was written by Homer and Euripides. Women's stories often disappear, or else their voices are annexed by a male author. We wanted to take a good look at this lopsided state of affairs, with our audience.

Kuno Bakker (KB): The historical perspective is always that of the heroes – of great people, doing great things – while the women get cast in supporting roles, as a slave, someone’s mother, or a beautiful ‘prize of war’. These stories, in which women are cast as victims, are the ones that keep being passed down.

Stories are central to how we think about our identity and what we expect from society. The focus on conflicts and heroic acts has affected how we think about ourselves, the values we hold dear, and the part we see ourselves as playing. The only conclusion you can draw from that tradition is that what we find important is fighting. If you just die it’s a tragedy, but if you die fighting it’s meaningful, because you die a hero.

Would the current situation be any different if women had passed down the story of Troy?

MT: That’s exactly the question we’re posing.

KB: What would our world look like today if they had?

MT: We literally take this as our subject: we get our mothers to tell the stories of the women in Troy.

You nevertheless still decided to ask a man, Tiago Rodrigues, to write it with you.

MT: You could choose to work exclusively with women, but then you’d still be missing out about half the population. The problems that come out of that dominant male perspective – like being scared to let our daughters go out after dark – is something we can only tackle if we shift everyone’s thinking. You can protect your daughters of course, but you need to educate your sons as well.”

The world as it is now is totally different if you’re a woman. We use the war like a pressure cooker to manifest that fact really quickly. We believe we need to get to a narrative that’s accepted by women and men alike. That’s why we made this piece as a group, and why there are four of us together on stage: two men, and two women – the two of us along with Tomer Pawlicki and Alesya Andrushevskaya.

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*We'd worked with Tiago before. We made *The Jew* with him in 2011. So we knew he was capable of reflecting on these sorts of questions. He knows how to find the nuance, and his writing is really personal, which means it's also emotionally moving.*

KB: [Tiago] was the one who came up with the idea of asking his mother how she remembered the story of Troy. Three of our mothers experienced war. My mother, for example, was interned in a Japanese camp [during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia in WWII], and it affected the whole course of her life. Alesya and her mother fled the war in Ukraine.

Tiago took our letters and the essence of our mothers that emerged from them and connected them in a beautiful way with the characters in the play: Hecuba, Cassandra, Andromache and Helen. It became a sort of choral work in which all those female perspectives get the chance to shine – and that includes the question of why it's a man writing them down.

And this all takes place in the English language. Why is that?

MT: It's the language the play was written in, and the language we used to discuss the subject matter, because Alesya doesn't speak Dutch yet. We were really keen to work with her. She's a very fine actor and she's come from an ongoing war situation, so she's got plenty to say. It's a second language for all of us, so doing it in English means no one is being placed at a disadvantage."

Theatre

Dood Paard – Women in Troy, As Told by Our Mothers. Frascati Theatre, Amsterdam, 18 to 22 October, premiere on 20 October. In English, with Dutch surtitles.



**TECHNICAL RIDER
WOMEN IN TROY, AS
TOLD BY OUR MOTHERS
DOOD PAARD**

Photography Sanne Peper

•
Technical production: Michael Yallop
0031-612851926
techniek@doodpaard.nl

GENERAL

INFO

ATTACHMENTS

- Lighting plot

GENERAL INFO

Technicians Dood Paard: 2

Technicians Venue: 2

Actors :4

Transport: 1 x Boxtruck (EU drivers license B)

Runtime show: 2 x Car (when traveling in Benelux)

Get-in time: 6 - 8 hours depending on technical facilities

Get-out time: 1 - 2 hours

Balletfloor: Black, provided by venue

Blacks: Side blacks + backdrop

Minimum stage size: 8m x 7m

Minimum clearance: 5m

Smoke: No

Video:Yes

Fire:Nee

Lighting desk: Chamsys MQ50 (we bring our own)

Sound desk: Venue provides

The set consists of a wooden floor coated with a thin layer of copper sheet. Size is 8m by 5m. On the floor there is a construction made out of steel pipes and steel fences, with the highest pipe at 4 meters height. The construction is covered with cloths. On the floor there are 4 little stools. Behind the cloths there a 4 ladders. The actors perform the last act on the ladders just above the steel construction.

SOUND

We would like to use the sound system provided by the venue. We'll bring a laptop and a sound card.

06-01-23 2 van 3

LIGHT

Check out the light plot. Please inform us if anything can't be provided.

VIDEO

We'll bring our own videoprojector and cabling. The projector will be hung approximately above the second or third row of the seating.

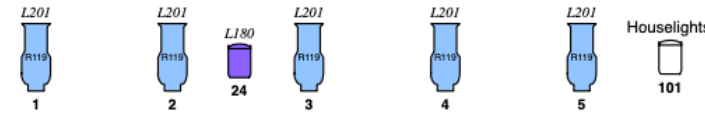
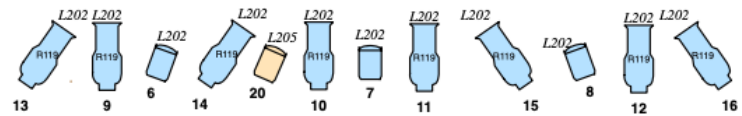
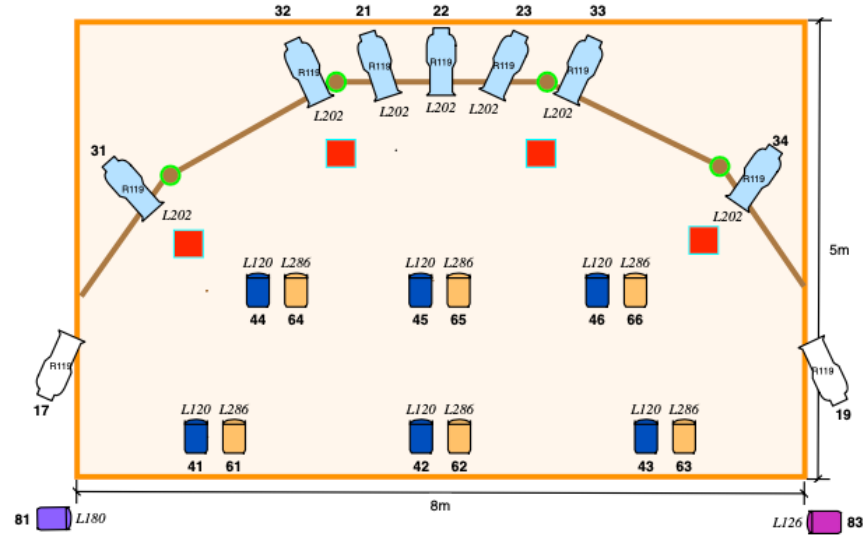
SUBTITLES

The surtitles will be projected by our own projector, and will be controlled by one of our staff members. Please make sure there is enough space at the FOH.

WOMEN IN TROY - DOOD PAARD

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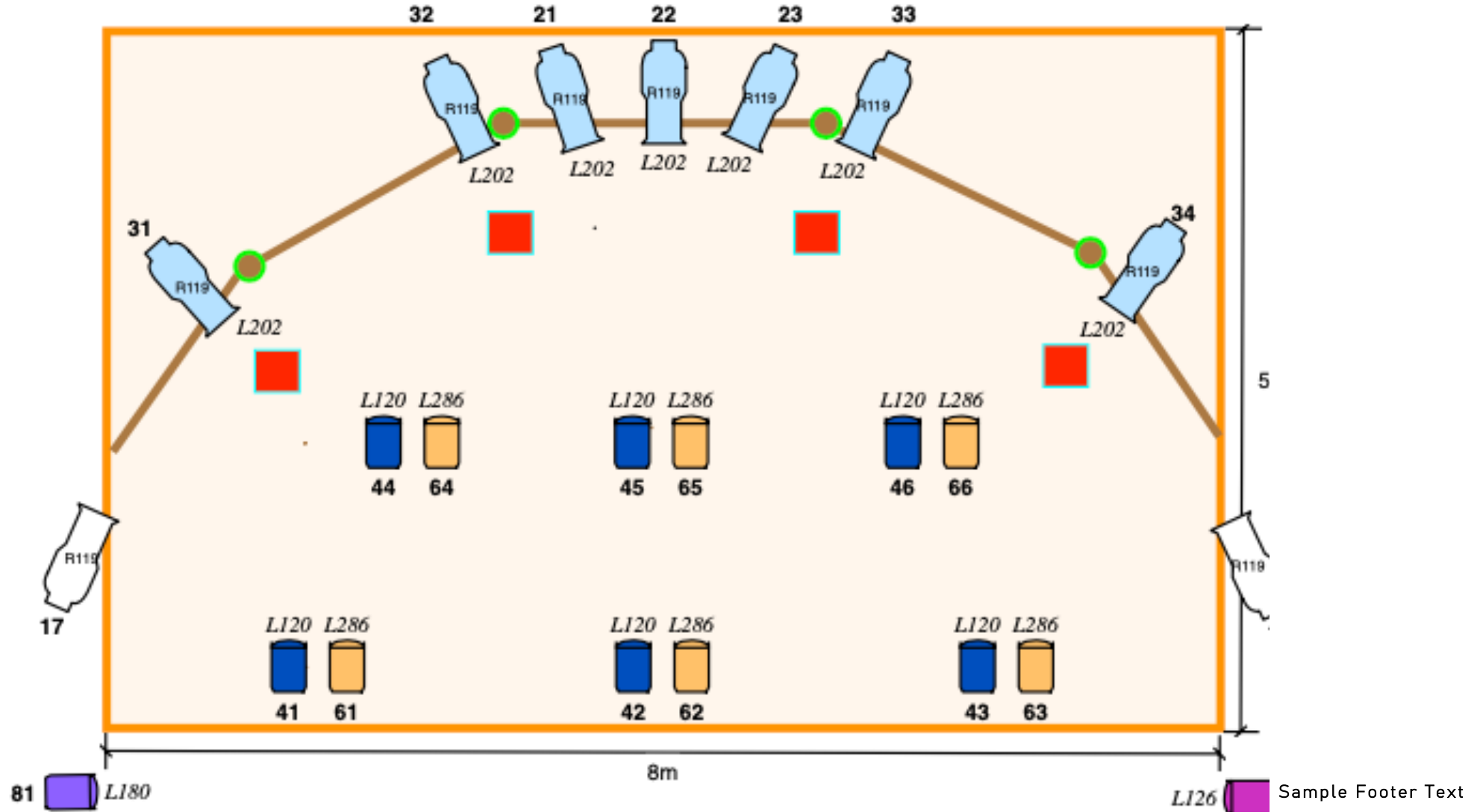
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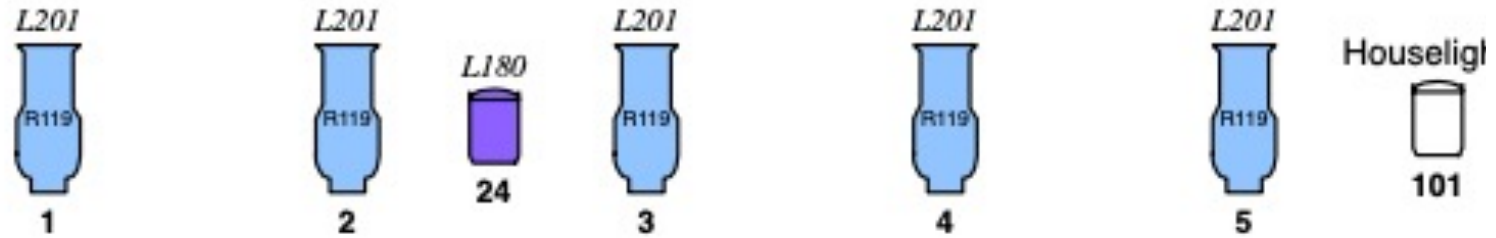
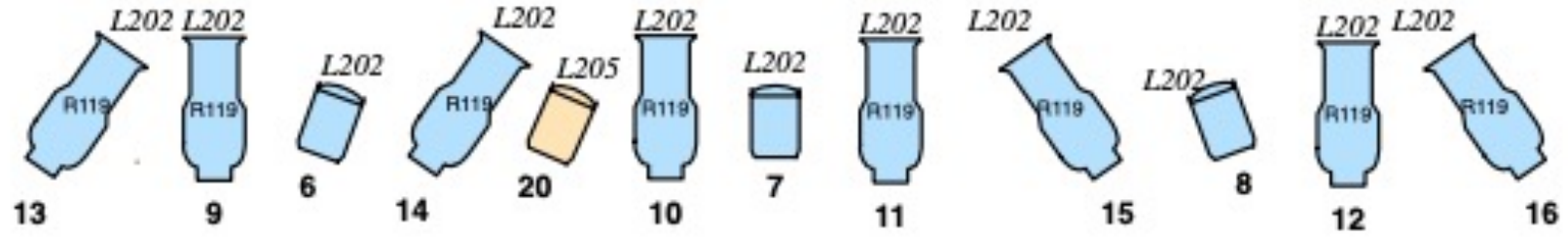





	23 x 1kw Profile	GELS	
	20 x 1kw PC	22x R119	5x L201
	2 x 2kw Fresnel	19x L202	2x L180
		7x L120	1x L126
		6x L268	



WOMEN IN TROY - DOOD PAARD





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	20 x 1kw PC	22x R119	5x L201
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