Hilde Gunn Slottemo

Private Lives. A History

Privatlivets historie

Genre: Non-Fiction
Category: History / Essay
Publisher: Humanist Forlag
Year: 2025
Pages: 206
ISBN: 9788282822824

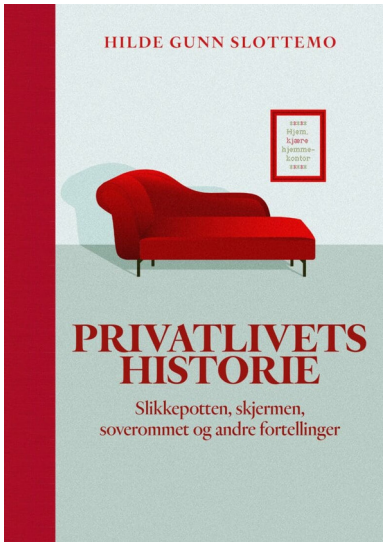
Photo: Lise Musum Stangvik

"No, that's private," we tend to reply when faced with questions we prefer to avoid. We don't read other people's diaries—certainly not openly. We are reluctant to enter other people's bedrooms. We often talk about "the sanctity of private life," where the private is something to be protected and preserved.

But what is considered private is not constant. Before industrialization, it was not uncommon for household members, including servants, to share a bed. For the housewife, the home was a workplace. And with the emergence of screens, the dynamic between the private and the public has once again changed: The world has entered our living rooms, and our living rooms have entered the world.

Through thirteen chapters on our private lives, Hilde Gunn Slottemo has written a new and different story about our recent history.

Hilde Gunn Slottemo is a professor of history.



'A highlight of the book is the depiction of how the combination of active social democratic policies and commercial forces transforms the role of the housewife in the post-war era. Slottemo illustrates how state campaigns and advertising function as public mirrors of the private sphere. Schematically, one could say that women transitioned from being unpaid domestic workers to becoming consumers and wage earners in the public sphere. I am reminded of Annie Ernaux's novel The Years, a book that, on an even more microscopic level, portrays similar changes in France. The focus on women's central role in societal transformations is a strong feature of *The History of Private Life*.'

Klassekampen

Hilde Gunn Slottemo is a professor of history at Nord University and vice chair of the Researcher's Union for the period 2025-2028. She is an experienced history communicator. She has written several articles and books, including the book *Et Fritt Ord. Stiftelse og samfunn, 1974-2024* (Aschehoug 2024), about the history of freedom of expression over the last fifty years. She has also written *En kort introduksjon til Norge på 1900-tallet. Forskjell og fellesskap* (Cappelen Damm 2021).

Rightsholder
Humanist forlag
bente.pihlstrom@human.no
+47 41 56 47 97
humanistforlag.no

Interview
Read our interview with the author here