



# **From Ballroom to DanceSport: Aesthetics, Athletics, and Body Culture (SUNY series in Communication Studies)**

*Caroline Joan S. Picart*

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*An insider explores the transformation of ballroom dance into an Olympic sport.*

Drawing on recent media portrayals and her own experience, author and dancer Caroline Joan S. Picart explores ballroom dancing and its more “sporty” equivalent, DanceSport, suggesting that they are reflective of larger social, political, and cultural tensions. The past several years have seen a resurgence in the popularity of ballroom dance as well as an increasing international anxiety over how and whether to transform ballroom into an Olympic sport. Writing as a participant-critic, Picart suggests that both are crucial sites where bodies are packaged as racialized, sexualized, nationalized, and classed objects. In addition, Picart argues, as the choreography, costuming, and genre of ballroom and DanceSport continue to evolve, these theatrical productions are aestheticized and constructed to encourage commercial appeal, using the narrative frame of the competitive melodrama to heighten audience interest.

**Caroline Joan S. Picart** captured second place at the 2005 United States DanceSport Championships in the World Pro Am Cabaret Champion category, as well as second place at the Millennium National Pro Am Cabaret Championship. When not dancing, she is Associate Professor of English and Courtesy Associate Professor of Law at Florida State University, and is the author of many books, including *Remaking the Frankenstein Myth on Film: Between Laughter and Horror*, also published by SUNY Press, and *Inside Notes from the Outside*.

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