

# Elizabeth Streb

MacArthur “Genius” Award-winner, Elizabeth Streb has dived through glass, allowed a ton of dirt to fall on her head, walked down (the outside of) London’s City Hall, and set herself on fire, among other feats of extreme action. Her popular book, [STREB: How to Become an Extreme Action Hero](#) (Feminist Press), was made into a hit documentary, [Born to Fly](#) directed by Catherine Gund (Aubin Pictures), which premiered at SXSW and received an extended run at The Film Forum in New York City in 2014. Streb founded the STREB Extreme Action Company in 1979. In 2003, she established SLAM, the STREB Lab for Action Mechanics, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. SLAM’s garage doors are always open: anyone and everyone can come in, watch rehearsals, take classes, and learn to fly.

Elizabeth Streb was invited to present a [TED Talk \(‘My Quest To Defy Gravity and Fly’\)](#) at TED 2018: THE AGE OF AMAZEMENT as a mainstage speaker. She has been a featured speaker presenting her keynote lectures at such places as the [Rubin Museum of Art \(in conversation with Dr. John W. Krakauer\)](#), [TEDxMET](#), the Institute for Technology and Education (ISTE), [POPTech](#), the Institute of Contemporary Art (in conversation with physicist, Brian Greene), The Brooklyn Museum of Art (in conversation with author A.M. Homes), the National Performing Arts Convention, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP), the [Penny Stamps Speaker Series at the University of Michigan](#), Chorus America, the University of Utah, and as a Caroline Werner Gannett Project speaker in Rochester NY, and gave the 2019 [Commencement Speech at Otis College for Arts and Design](#) among others. Her essay, “Unreasonable Movement, Unreasonable Thought” is featured in the book *Are the Arts Essential?* published by NYU press in 2022.

Streb was profiled by Alec Wilkinson in an extended essay [“Rough and Tumble: Elizabeth Streb’s daredevil dances”](#) for the *New Yorker* magazine in June 2015, was featured in the [Smithsonian Magazine](#) (“The New American Circus”), and in 2019 was featured on the front page of the [Wall Street Journal](#).

Streb received a Doris Duke Artist Award in 2013, and a USA Fellowship in 2020. She holds a Master of Arts in Humanities and Social Thought from New York University, a Bachelor of Science in Modern Dance from SUNY Brockport, and honorary doctorates from SUNY Brockport, Rhode Island College and Otis College of Art and Design. Streb has received

numerous other awards and fellowships including the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1987; a Brandeis Creative Arts Award in 1991; two New York Dance and Performance Awards (Bessie Awards), in 1988 and 1999 for her “sustained investigation of movement;” and over 35 years of on-going support from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). In 2009, Streb was the Danspace Project Honoree. She served on Mayor Bloomberg’s Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission and was a member on the boards of the Jerome Foundation (2012-2021) and the Camargo Foundation (2013-2017).

Major commissions for choreography include: Lincoln Center Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center, MOCA, LA Temporary Contemporary, the Whitney Museum of Art, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, the Park Avenue Armory, London 2012, the Cultural Olympiad for the Summer Games, CityLab Paris 2018, the opening of Bloomberg’s new headquarters in London, Musée D’Orsay, the re-opening of the Théâtre du Châtelet, and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. *Born to Fly* aired on PBS on May 11, 2014 and is currently available on iTunes. [OXD](#), directed by Craig Lowy, which follows STREB at the 2012 London Olympics and the two years prior, premiered at the IFC Center in New York City on February 2, 2016. Streb and her company have also been featured in [PopAction](#) by Michael Blackwood; on PBS’s *In The Life* and *Great Performances*; CBS’s *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Sunday Morning* and [This Morning](#); BBC World News; CNN’s *Weekend Today* and *Larry King Live*, Business Insider; MTV; and on the National Public Radio shows [Studio 360](#) and [Science Friday](#), among others.