A new version of Cinema 4D is coming in January

The update will give Cinema 4D a massive performance boost on the MacBook Pro, by connecting external graphics cards (eGPUs).

While in New York this week to check out the new Apple iMac Pro, we encountered a forthcoming version of Cinema 4D being demoed to show just how powerful the iMac Pro could be when paired with additional hardware. However, what we saw isn't just confined to the iMac Pro – and the underlying tech will also accelerate other types of Mac (when Apple releases its own update).

The iMac Pro was connected to two Sonnet eGFX Breakaway Boxes. These are external enclosures a bit like an external hard drive – except instead of putting storage inside them, you put a graphics card (or a specialised acceleration board such as the Avid Pro Tools | HDX for audio editing).



The two we saw each had an AMD Radeon Pro WX9100 graphics card inside – which is based on the same Vega graphics architecture found in the iMac Pro itself. However, it's possible to add Nvidia Quadro boards if you prefer as Nvidia offers Mac drivers for its pro range. This would allow you to add cards with higher performance, such as the Nvidia Quadro P6000 with 24GB RAM (compared to the WX9100's 16GB of memory).

The showcase the performance possible with two eGPUs connected, Maxon showed us a scene featuring a full CAD model of a motorbike with millions of polygons that could be worked with using AMD's ProRender engine for interactive rendering in a responsive manner. The company also demoed the complex scene you can see at the top of this story, with emitting bulbs and refracting glass. The cards would also reduce render times significantly, as ProRender uses the GPU for rendering.

ProRender was added in Cinema 4D R19 in the summer and, despite being created by AMD, it works with Nvidia graphics cards as well.

eGPUs perhaps make the most sense for 3D artists using a MacBook Pro than one of the desktop Macs – as having a laptop allows you to work wherever you need, gaining additional performance when you're at your desk (and additional screens, and a keyboard, mouse, graphics tablet and the like). Connecting an eGPU to an iMac or iMac Pro is a quick way to boost its performance for a moderately low cost – that of the graphics card and US$249 (around £185) for the Breakaway Box. However, if you're considering buying an iMac Pro and one or two of these, you might want to wait to see if Apple's next Mac Pro – due in 2018 – will fit your needs/budget better.

The update to Cinema 4D is due in January, though Apple's support for eGPUs is currently still in beta and only really for developers. Full support is due in the Spring.

https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/news/creative-software/new-version-of-cinema-4d-is-coming-in-january/