

Getting started

Prerequisites

The following are required to be able to use Elementacular 1.5:

- Windows x64 platform.
- Maya 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 or 2018.
- OpenGL viewport 2.0.
- NVIDIA graphics card – See supported hardware below.
- Graphics driver with OpenGL 4.4 support.



Supported hardware

We generally recommend a GPU with at least 2GB of dedicated GPU memory (VRAM).

All Nvidia graphics cards from the 400 series or newer is supported.

All AMD graphics cards from the Evergreen (HD 5xxx) Series or newer is supported.

Integrated Intel GPUs are not officially supported but may work for you.

Installation

Install the Elementacular module using the supplied installer. The plug-in uses Maya Apps Exchange framework.

Samples included

The installer includes sample scenes (default location is "C:\Program Files\Elementacular\Samples").

Your first cloud

- Switch the viewport to Viewport 2.0 (Maya 2014 only).
- Enable "Smooth shade all" and "Textured" viewport draw modes.
- Place a polygon sphere with radius 10 in the scene.
- Open Hypershade.
- Create an "Elementacular Cloud Shader" material node.
- Apply the material to the polygon sphere placed.
- Place a directional or point light in the scene.

Tips and tricks

- As a rule of thumb use light sources with an intensity in the 1 - 500 range.
- To achieve realistic looking clouds using the FLD multiscattering method, disable the Singlscatter term by setting the "Singlscatter Scale" to 0.0.
- Using the "Density Emission Ramp" requires a "Density scale" above 1.0 and only works when using the FLD multiscattering method.

Known issues

- Volume emission only works with the FLD multiscattering method.
- The “Elementacular Cloud Shader” node does not render using Mental Ray or any other rendering engines. Currently the solution is Viewport 2.0 only. As a workaround, use the “Export to VDB” or “Convert to fluid” features. These, however, only support outputting the volume densities – not volume emission or albedo.
- There is currently no official support for parametric surfaces.
- Volumes generated by separate applied materials do not shadow each other. As a workaround, group geometry using the “Combine” feature.