SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CREATING MOTION BLUR

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ABSTRACT

An embedded, programmable motion blur system and method is described. Embodiments include receiving a plurality of vertices in a graphics processing unit (GPU), displacing at least one vertex, receiving a primitive defined by at least one of the displaced vertices, and generating a plurality of primitive samples from the primitive. The receiving of a plurality of vertices, the displacing, the receiving a primitive, and the generating are all performed prior to rendering of the scene. The system includes a central processing unit (CPU), a memory unit coupled to the CPU, and at least one programmable GPU. The GPU includes a vertex shader and a geometry shader programmable to perform geometry amplification and generate a plurality of primitive samples, both of these performed before the scene is rendered.
We?ter x Wertex Shader 402

Geometry Shader 404

Vertices Rasterizer 406

Pixel Shader 408

Frame Buffer 410

Resources (buffer, texture)
SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CREATING MOTION BLUR

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/096,016, filed Mar. 30, 2005, which is incorporated by reference as if fully set forth.

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0002] The invention is in the field of graphics processing.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Motion blur is an effect seen in photographs taken of a moving object. A camera exposes a sheet of light sensitive film to a scene for a short period of time. The light from the scene hits the film, reacts with the chemicals in the film, and results in the eventual photograph. If the scene changes during the previously described exposure, a blurred image results. Motion blur is present in most films and television programs, and may not be very noticeable, but its presence lends a realistic feeling. In computer animation, it is often desirable to create an effect that is as close to a filmed scene as possible. The absence of motion blur in computer animation is noticeable and makes the animation seem unrealistic. For example, fast movement in an animation that has no motion blur is jerky.

[0004] Various techniques have been devised to include motion blur in computer animated scenes. For example, to create motion blur in animated scenes, many additional frames are rendered than previously for display over a particular time period, so that the jerkiness of movement from frame to frame can be smoothed out. However, current techniques for including motion blur in animated scenes have significant limitations. In general, current motion blur techniques do not provide both good quality, and acceptable interactivity and efficiency.

[0005] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of one traditional post rendering motion blur technique 100. Technique 100 involves a graphics processing unit (GPU) 102 and a software application 104. The software application communicates with a host processor (not shown) and a memory (not shown) in a system. The memory may be shared with other components or functions. The memory includes an accumulation buffer that is used by the application 104. Technique 100 performs scene processing and multi-pass rendering to generate additional samples of scene objects. A scene is rendered, or drawn, in a time t, then another is drawn in a time t+1, t+2, etc. The times define an aperture period, which is analogous to the time a camera aperture is open and exposed to a scene. The rendered scenes are superimposed one on another over the aperture period. The scene thus obtains some motion blur.

[0006] Technique 100 executes one rendering pass per image space sample, requiring tens of samples to achieve minimally acceptable quality, and is thus slow. Technique 100 is also fairly limited in its ability to improve motion blur quality. For example, technique 100 is especially limited in its transformation capability. Technique 100 is further limited to applying motion blur in a single direction conforming to a predefined vector.

[0007] Technique 100 also potentially imposes a computation burden. If it desirable to apply the motion blur to every scene, the entire process of rendering must be repeated many times, complicating the application 104 because the application program must manage all of the image processing and also display the images. Also, the application 104 takes an object like a sphere, and essentially moves it in space as a whole. Then each reproduced sample is tessellated into triangles and fed to the GPU 102, impacting other graphics processing. The size of the accumulation buffer is a further constraint on the speed and quality of technique 100. In addition, the accumulation buffer draws excess GPU frame buffer resources, trading off desired locality of textures in memory.

[0008] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of one traditional pre-rendering motion blur technique 200. Technique 200 involves a graphics processing unit (GPU) 202 and a software application 204. The software application communicates with a host processor (not shown) and a memory (not shown) in a system. The memory may be shared with other components or functions. Technique 200 performs scene processing, and to apply motion blur, geometry amplification. Technique 200 preserves more sample details as compared to technique 100. However, technique 200 imposes geometry amplification at the top of the graphics processing pipeline in the host processor, hence limiting graphics feature orthogonality, consuming additional time, and overloading the host processor to GPU bandwidth. The GPU 202 is required to perform unnecessary computations on a large number of vertices coming into it. As a consequence of these considerations, technique 200 is especially limited to applying motion blur to simple objects.

[0009] Techniques 100 and 200 are examples of prior techniques which are demanding of resources including memory and processing bandwidth. Prior techniques are forced to constrain the use of motion blur to limited transformation and/or application to simplified objects, such as spheres.

[0010] Because motion blur is traditionally controlled by a software application which interface with fixed functionality in a GPU, known techniques suffer scalability in the presence of other graphics features, and place an additional burden on the human graphics programmer.

SUMMARY

[0011] An embedded, programmable motion blur system and method is described. Embodiments include receiving a plurality of vertices in a graphics processing unit (GPU), displacing at least one vertex, receiving a primitive defined by at least one of the displaced vertices, and generating a plurality of primitive samples from the primitive. The receiving of a plurality of vertices, the displacing, the receiving a primitive, and the generating are all performed prior to rendering of the scene. The system includes a central processing unit (CPU), a memory unit coupled to the CPU, and at least one programmable GPU. The GPU includes a vertex shader and a geometry shader programmable to perform geometry amplification and generate a plurality of primitive samples, both of these performed before the scene is rendered.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a prior art post rendering motion blur technique.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a prior art pre-rendering motion blur technique.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a system including a graphics processing unit (GPU) according to an embodiment.
FIG. 4 is a block diagram of the GPU of FIG. 3 according to an embodiment.  
FIG. 5A is a diagram of a triangle with vertices V0, V1 and V2 as input to the geometry shader of an embodiment.  
FIG. 5B is a diagram of multiple triangles as output by the geometry shader of an embodiment.  
FIG. 6A is a diagram of a triangle as it is linearly transformed from time 0 to time aperture according to an embodiment.  
FIG. 6B is a diagram of a triangle as it is linearly transformed from time 0 to time aperture according to an embodiment including two convex hulls.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

An embedded, programmable motion blur system and method is described herein. Embodiments include applying displacement on a vertex level and amplification on a primitive level within a graphics pipeline. Embodiments described herein provide more accurate motion blur functionality with improved scalability inside a graphics pipeline. The motion blur functionality is completely orthogonal to other graphics features. In addition, embodiments described herein do not overburden an existing graphics application or existing memory capacity.

One embodiment of a technique as described herein applies motion blur to any type of object, which is pre-tesselated into triangles. The transformation of the object from its initial position to its aperture extent is relatively generic, and includes, but is not limited to, translation, scaling, and rotation. Other types of transformations may also be employed in this or other embodiments of the present invention. Embodiments execute motion blur in the middle of the graphics processing pipeline, providing a significant improvement in graphics feature scalability and orthogonality. For example, both displaced and non-displaced geometries are treated similarly with regard to motion blur. Also, object (e.g. triangle) samples along the motion vector may adaptively be assigned a transparency value, based on time.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a system 300 including a graphics processing unit (GPU) 302 according to an embodiment. System 300 includes a central processing unit (CPU) 304, also referred to as a host processor. The CPU 304 communicates with a memory 310, an input/output (I/O) unit 308 and GPU 302 via a memory hub 306. The memory 310 includes memory usable by the GPU 302 and other components of the system 300. The GPU 302 includes several resources (not shown) including local memory, or graphics memory that is local to the GPU 302. The memory hub 306 communicates with various system 300 components via one or more peripheral component interface (PCI)-express (PCI-E) buses. In various embodiments, one or more of the referenced components can be replicated, for example such that there are multiple GPUs 302 in the system 300.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of the GPU 302 according to an embodiment. The GPU 302 includes various hardware and software components to provide specialized processing of graphics data. The GPU 302 is flexibly programmable to process data to produce a variety of results. The GPU 302 includes a vertex shader 402, a geometry shader 404, a rasterizer 406, a pixel shader 408, and a frame buffer 410. The GPU 302 also includes resources 412, including buffer resources and texture resources. The vertex shader 402, the geometry shader 404, and the pixel shader 408 use the resources 412 to store shared data.

In various embodiments, one or more of the referenced elements may be replicated, for example such that there are multiple geometry shaders 404 in the GPU 302. The replication may be effected by programming hardware to duplicate functionality, by duplication of hardware, or any combination of the two.

The vertex shader receives a vertex as input and outputs a vertex. A vertex may have multiple attributes, including but not limited to position, normal, color, and texture coordinate (for example, an image can be applied later using the coordinate). In an embodiment that creates motion blur in a scene as described herein, the vertex shader applies displacement. For example, the vertex received represents a vertex in a scene that is being processed by the GPU 302. The output vertex is the same vertex, but programmably transformed, including displacement.

The geometry shader 404 is a programmable unit that accepts primitives, such as, for example, a point, line, triangle or other polygon as input. Primitives are input to the geometry shader in the form of vertices, e.g. a single vertex for point, two vertices for a line, or three vertices for a triangle. Optionally, the geometry shader 404 may also receive the vertex data for the edge-adjacent primitives, e.g., an additional two vertices for a line, and an additional three vertices for a triangle. While the vertex shader is a one-to-one process (one vertex in and one vertex out) the geometry shader is a one-to-many process, receiving one primitive and outputting many primitives. In one embodiment, the geometry shader performs one-to-many triangle mapping, and thus provides geometry amplification within the graphics pipeline. As an example, FIG. 5A shows a triangle 502 with vertices V0, V1 and V2. The vertices of triangle 502 are input to the geometry shader 404. The geometry shader runs application-specific shader code that generates vertices for output. Embodiments of the motion blur method described herein use a triangle such as triangle 502 as input to the geometry shader 404.

FIG. 5B is a diagram of an output topology for the geometry shader 404 according to an embodiment. The geometry shader 404 is capable of outputting multiple vertices forming a single selected topology. Some geometry shader 404 output topologies available are triangle-strip, line-strip and point list, but the embodiment is not necessarily so limited. FIG. 5D is a diagram of a triangle-strip topology 504 according to an embodiment. The vertices V0, V1, and V2 are present, as well as vertices V3, V4, V5, and V6. The strip topology 504 provides for the reuse of vertices for increased efficiency. For example, a first triangle is formed of vertices V0, V1, and V2, another triangle is formed of V1, V3, and V2, another triangle is formed of V1, V4, and V3, and so on. An N-vertices strip form surface yields N–2 triangles.

The number of primitives output by the geometry shader 404 can vary freely within any invocation of the geometry shader 404, though the maximum number of vertices that can be emitted may be declared statically in the shader code before hand. Strip topology lengths output from an invocation of the geometry shader 404 can be arbitrary. The geometry shader 404 code utilizes two primary topology statements: emit and emit. Each emit statement produces one vertex at the output. A cut statement indicates a break in a strip topology, and a new start for a primitive. An embodiment of motion blur shader code as further described below runs on the geometry shader 404 and generates a known number of triangles on the
output. The output triangles are disjoint, and hence a cut statement takes place for every three vertices emitted.

[0029] The output of the geometry shader 404 may be fed to the rasterizer 406 and/or out to a resource buffer in memory 412. Output fed to memory 412 is expanded to individual point/line/triangle lists. Output fed to the rasterizer 406 is also expanded to individual point/line/triangle lists.

[0030] In one embodiment the geometry shader 404 includes various levels of software to perform processing including, geometry processing, and vertex processing. The levels of software include high-level shader language (HLSL), and Open GL Shading Language (GLSL). HLSL and GLSL are high-level shading languages that can be analogized to high-level languages such as C++. In an embodiment, the high-level shading languages are compiled into the hardware of the GPU 302 to provide more efficiency, speed, flexibility and capability, including embedded or integrated motion blur capability.

[0031] Referring again to FIG. 4, the rasterizer 406 receives the amplified primitives that are output from the geometry shader 404. The rasterizer 406 prepares an image for display or printing according to known methods.

[0032] The pixel shader 408 receives the output of the rasterizer 408. A pixel shader is a graphics function that calculates effects on a per-pixel basis as known in the art.

[0033] The frame buffer 410 receives the output of the pixel shader 408.

[0034] An algorithm for creating motion blur with the geometry shader 404 according to an embodiment will now be described with reference to FIGS. 6A and 6B. FIG. 6A is a diagram of a triangle as it is linearly transformed from time 0 to time aperture according to an embodiment. Time 0 is the time at which a hypothetical camera aperture opens on a scene, and time aperture is the time at which the hypothetical camera aperture closes. A triangle with vertices V0, V1 and V2 is input to the geometry shader 404 at time 0. The dotted lines form a volume that is called the convex hull. There can also be two convex hulls. FIG. 6B is a diagram of two convex hulls defined by a triangle as it is linearly transformed from time 0 to time aperture.

[0035] Referring again to FIG. 6A, the triangles interpolated between time 0 and time aperture are samples that show the intermediate triangles between time 0 and time aperture. The compiled shading code to execute on the geometry shader includes first triangle transformation information regarding transformations the triangle undergoes over the time period from time 0 to time aperture. The geometry shader uses the information to perform operations on the input triangle, including translation, scaling, and rotation.

[0036] The geometry shader 404 linearly transforms the input triangle to obtain its position and orientation at time aperture. Then, the convex hull is obtained from the triangle at time 0 and the triangle at time aperture. The geometry shader 404 constructs the triangle samples in the delimited convex hull at programmable intervals. The input triangle, samples and the triangle at aperture time are output to the rasterizer 406.

[0037] Current software applications are not able to perform translation, scaling, and rotation as described because of prohibitive efficiency costs. Current software applications also avoid applying motion blur on a primitive (e.g., triangle) basis for the reasons previously mentioned. Current software application solutions to motion blur are limited to avoid prohibitively or unacceptably slow interaction speed. Embodiments of the invention can apply motion blur to different objects in a same field moving in different direction, for example by assigning processing of one object to one geometry shader, and assigning processing of the other object to another geometry shader.

[0038] Motion blur pseudo code for execution by the geometry shader 404 according to an embodiment is shown below.

```cpp
if (globals uniforms float numSamples; uniform float 4x4 mTransform;
struct VI { float4 Pos : SV_POSITION;
float4 Col2 : COLOR;
float2 Tex : TEXCOORD;
};
struct VO { float4 Pos : SV_POSITION;
float4 Col2 : COLOR;
float2 Tex : TEXCOORD;
};
[MaxVertexCount [3*numSamples]]
void motionblur(VI in[3])
{
  // transform incoming triangle to a triangle in time = aperture
  V1 aperture[i];
  for(int i = 0; i < 3; ++i)
    aperture[i] = mTransform * in[i] + mTransform;
  // derive triangle samples in the convex hull formed by
  // incoming/aperture triangle
  V1 samples[numSamples];
  // compute respective input-to-aperture vertex distances and
  // derive sample separation float d[:];
  for(int i = 0; i < 3; ++i)
    d[i] = distance(in[i].Pos, aperture[i].Pos) / numSamples;
  // compute line equation for input-to-aperture connection
  float k0[i][k1][k2][k3];
  for(int i = 0; i < 3; ++i)
    k0[i] = aperture[i].Pos.x - in[i].Pos.x;
  k1[i] = aperture[i].Pos.y - in[i].Pos.y;
  k2[i] = aperture[i].Pos.z - in[i].Pos.z;
  // create triangle sample vertices based on connecting line
  // and input-to-aperture separation distance
  for(int i = 0; i < numSamples; ++i)
    samples[i][j].Pos =
      getPoint(k0[i][k1][k2][k3] * d[i]);
}
```

[0039] Aspects of the invention described above may be implemented as functionality programmed into any of a variety of circuitry, including but not limited to programmable logic devices (PLDs), such as field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), programmable array logic (PAL) devices, electrically programmable logic and memory devices and standard cell-based devices, as well as application specific integrated circuits (ASICs) and fully custom integrated circuits. Some other possibilities for implementing aspects of the invention include: microcontrollers with memory (such as electronically erasable programmable read only memory (EEPROM)), embedded microprocessors, firmware, software, etc. Furthermore, aspects of the invention may be embodied in microprocessors having software-based circuit emulation, discrete logic (sequential and combinatorial), custom devices, fuzzy (neural) logic, quantum devices, and hybrids of any of the above device types. Of course the underlying device technologies may be provided in a variety of compo-
inent types, e.g., metal-oxide semiconductor field-effect transistor (MOSFET) technologies like complementary metal-oxide semiconductor (CMOS), bipolar technologies like emitter-coupled logic (ECL), polymer technologies (e.g., silicone-conjugated polymer and metal-conjugated polymer-metal structures), mixed analog and digital, etc.

[0040] Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the claims, the words "comprise," "comprising," and the like are to be construed in an inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense, that is, to say, in a sense of "including, but not limited to." Words using the singular or plural number also include the plural or singular number respectively. Additionally, the word "herein," "hereunder," "above," "below," and words of similar import, when used in this application, refer to this application as a whole and not to any particular portions of this application. When the word "or" is used in reference to a list of two or more items, that word covers all of the following interpretations of the word: any of the items in the list, all of the items in the list, and any combination of the items in the list.

[0041] The above description of illustrated embodiments of the invention is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed. While specific embodiments of, and examples for, the invention are described herein for illustrative purposes, various equivalent modifications are possible within the scope of the invention, as those skilled in the relevant art will recognize. The teachings of the invention described herein can be applied to other systems, not only for the system including graphics processing as described above.

[0042] For example, a blurred image produced as described herein may be output to a variety of display devices, including computer displays that display moving pictures and printers that print static images.

[0043] The various operations described may be performed in a very wide variety of architectures and distributed differently than described. As an example, in a distributed system a server may perform some or all of the rendering process.

[0044] In other embodiments, some or all of the hardware and software capability described herein may exist in a processor, a camera or some other device. The motion blur techniques described herein may be applied as part of a process of constructing computerized polyhedral structures or geometries (e.g., including light parameters, etc.) from a video sequence. The geometries are then processed as described herein to include motion blur.

[0045] The elements and acts of the various embodiments described above can be combined to provide further embodiments. These and other changes can be made to the invention in light of the above detailed description.

[0046] In general, in the following claims, the terms used should not be construed to limit the motion blur method and system to the specific embodiments disclosed in the specification and the claims, but should be construed to include any processing systems that operate under the claims to provide motion blur processing. Accordingly, the motion blur method and system is not limited by the disclosure, but instead the scope of the motion blur method and system is to be determined entirely by the claims.

[0047] While certain aspects of the method and apparatus for motion blur processing are presented below in certain claim forms, the inventors contemplate the various aspects of the method and apparatus for motion blur processing in any number of claim forms. For example, while only one aspect of the method and apparatus for motion blur processing may be recited as embodied in computer-readable medium, other aspects may likewise be embodied in computer-readable medium. Accordingly, the inventors reserve the right to add additional claims after filing the application to pursue such additional claim forms for other aspects of the method and apparatus for motion blur processing.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for creating motion blur in a computer-generated scene, the method comprising:
   - receiving a plurality of vertices in a graphics processing unit (GPU), the plurality of vertices associated with a first object;
   - displacing at least one vertex of the plurality of vertices;
   - receiving, in the GPU, a primitive defined by at least one of the displaced vertices, the primitive having an initial position; and
   - generating a plurality of primitive samples from the primitive, wherein a last state of the generated primitive samples has an aperture extent position and wherein each of the remaining generated primitive samples has a position between the initial position and the aperture extent position;
   - wherein the receiving of a plurality of vertices, the displacing, the receiving a primitive, and the generating are all performed prior to rendering of the scene.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the generating of the plurality of primitive samples further includes delimiting at least one convex hull based on the initial and aperture extent positions.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein generating the plurality of primitive samples further includes constructing the plurality of primitive samples in the delimited convex hull at programmable intervals.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the primitive is a triangle defined by three vertices.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
   - performing the displacing on at least one second vertex in a second plurality of vertices corresponding to a second object moving in a direction different from a moving direction of the first object;
   - receiving a second primitive defined by at least one of the displaced second vertices; and
   - performing the generating to generate a second plurality of primitive samples from the second primitive to create motion blur of the second object.

6. A graphics processing system configured to create motion blur in a scene, comprising:
   - a central processing unit (CPU);
   - a memory unit coupled to the CPU;
   - at least one programmable graphics processing unit (GPU) coupled to the CPU and to the memory, wherein the at least one GPU comprises:
     - a vertex shader, programmable to receive an input vertex that is present in the scene, and to output a displaced vertex before the scene is rendered, the vertex being associated with a first object; and
a geometry shader, programmable to:

- perform geometry amplification of a received primitive having an initial position, and
- generate a plurality of primitive samples by performing operations on the received primitive, wherein a last one of the generated primitive samples has an aperture extent position and wherein each of the remaining generated primitive samples has a position between the initial position and the aperture extent position;

wherein the performing of geometry amplification and the generating of a plurality of primitive samples are performed before the scene is rendered.

7. The system of claim 6, further comprising buffer resources used by the vertex shader and the geometry shader to store shared data.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein the geometry shader is further programmable to generate the plurality of primitive samples by delimiting at least one convex hull based on the first and second positions.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the geometry shader is further programmable to generate the plurality of primitive samples by constructing the plurality of primitive samples in the delimited convex hull at programmable intervals.

10. The system of claim 6, wherein the received primitive is a triangle defined by three vertices.

11. The system of claim 6, further comprising:
- a second vertex shader programmable to receive a second input vertex and to output a second displaced vertex before the scene is rendered, the second vertex corresponding to a second object moving in a direction different from a moving direction of the first object; and
- a second geometry shader programmable to perform the geometry amplification of a second received primitive and to perform the generating to generate a second plurality of primitive samples from the second primitive to create motion blur of the second object;

wherein the performing of geometry amplification and the generating are performed before the scene is rendered.

12. The system of claim 6, further comprising a rasterizer coupled to receive the displaced and amplified primitives.

13. The system of claim 12, further comprising a pixel shader coupled to receive an output of the rasterizer.

14. The system of claim 13, further comprising a frame buffer coupled to the pixel shader for storing frames to be displayed.

15. A non-transitory computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when executed, cause the creation of motion blur in an animated scene, the instructions including:
- receiving a plurality of vertices;
- displacing at least one vertex of the plurality of vertices;
- receiving a primitive defined by at least one of the displaced vertices, the particular primitive having an initial position; and
- generating a plurality of primitive samples from the primitive by performing operations on the primitive, wherein a last one of the generated primitive samples has an aperture extent position and wherein each of the remaining generated primitive samples has a position between the initial position and the aperture extent position;

wherein the receiving of a plurality of vertices, the displacing, the receiving a primitive, and the generating a plurality of primitive samples are all performed prior to rendering of the scene.

16. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein generating the plurality of primitive samples further includes delimiting at least one convex hull based on the initial and aperture extent positions.

17. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein generating the plurality of primitive samples further includes constructing the plurality of primitive samples in the delimited convex hull at programmable intervals.

18. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the primitive is a triangle defined by three vertices.

19. The non-transitory computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further include:
- performing the displacing on at least one second vertex in a second plurality of vertices corresponding to a second object moving in a direction different from a moving direction of the first object;
- receiving a second primitive defined by at least one of the displaced second vertices; and
- performing the generating to generate a second plurality of primitive samples from the second primitive to create motion blur of the second object;

wherein the performing of the displacing on at least one second vertex, the receiving of the second primitive, and the generating of a second plurality of primitive samples are all performed prior to rendering of the scene.

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