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The GeForce 9800 GX2: Almost Here, Same Old Architecture

The G92 chips are built on the 65-nanometer process

Nvidia's highest-end graphics card offering is about to hit the market in just a few days. Although it has been anticipated to come with a totally new architecture, the successor of the popular GeForce 8800 series will feature the same core logic as the GeForce 8800GT. The GeForce 9800GX2 and the GeForce 9800GTX will be based on the same 65-nanometer G92 graphics core found on the GeForce 8800GT, but at least, all the 128 shaders will be enabled by default. In comparison, the last year's G92 graphics core would come with only 112 enabled shaders. The ultra high-end enthusiast graphics card is made of two G92 cores on a single board. Nvidia's manufacturing partners have been instructed to tune the graphics core frequency at 600 MHz, while the memory will be fixed at 2000 MHz. The stock GeForce 9800GX2 graphics card will come with a dual-slot cooling fan that will ventilate both processors. It is placed centrally, between the two graphics processors. Also, Nvidia's reference design card comes with two DVI outputs to replace the VGA ports and just one HDMI interface. At the moment, the details about Nvidia's top offering are scarce, given the fact that the Non-Disclosure Agreement ends on March 18, as announced during this year's CeBIT expo and show. Nvidia will also introduce the nForce 790i chipset, a refurbished version of the previous nForce 780i. The new chipset will come with full support for Intel's 45-nanometer quad-core processors and high-frequency DDR3 memory. On March 25, the graphics expert will introduce the GeForce 9800GTX model. Nvidia has chosen to first release the highest-end technology, and then to introduce the 9800GTX model. AMD did the other way around last month, when it first released the low-end and mid-range offerings, in order to conclude with the highest-end Radeon HD 3870X2. The 9800GTX will come with a core frequency set to 675 MHz, while the memory clock will reach 2000 MHz. The reference design will also come with dual-DVI ports, but there will be no HDMI connector.