MERCURY HELIOS FX

Quick Start Guide

Mac Compatibility (GPU cards)
- Hardware: Macs with a Thunderbolt 3 port
- OS version: 10.13.4 or later

Mac Compatibility (non-GPU cards)
- Hardware:
  - Macs with a Thunderbolt 3 port
  - Macs with Thunderbolt or Thunderbolt 2 port
    - Apple Thunderbolt 3 (USB-C) to Thunderbolt 2 Adapter required
- OS version:
  - macOS 10.12.6 or later

Windows Compatibility (All card types)
- Hardware: Windows PC with a Thunderbolt 3 port
- OS version: 64-bit editions of Windows 10, Version 1709 or later

Compatible PCIe Cards (including GPUs)
- Please see product web page for the latest information

OWC Mercury Helios FX

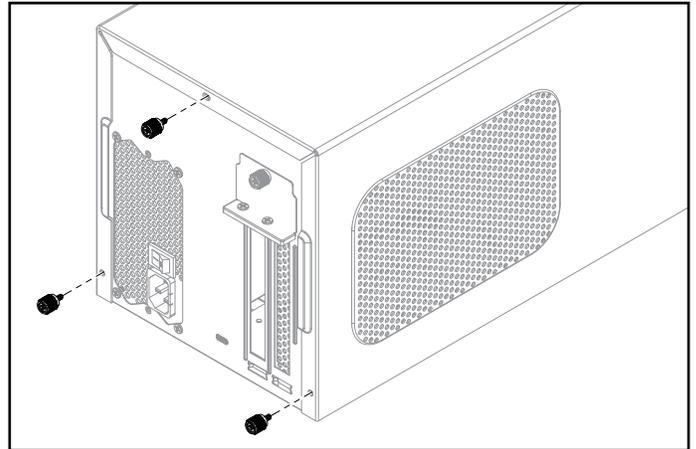Thunderbolt 3 cable

Not pictured:
AC power cable

The computer, PCIe card and eGPU are static-sensitive devices. They are susceptible to invisible damage if not protected during installation. We recommend the use of a grounding strap. Make sure to work in a clean, static-free area, and avoid wearing clothing that retains static charges. www.owcdigital.com/support/anti-static
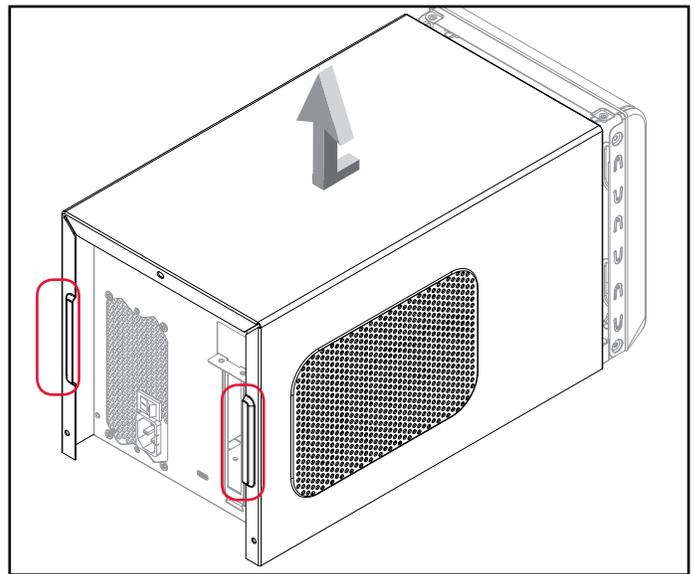
Installing a GPU or Other PCIe Card

Please use the steps below when installing a GPU or other PCIe card; these instructions depict a double-width card.
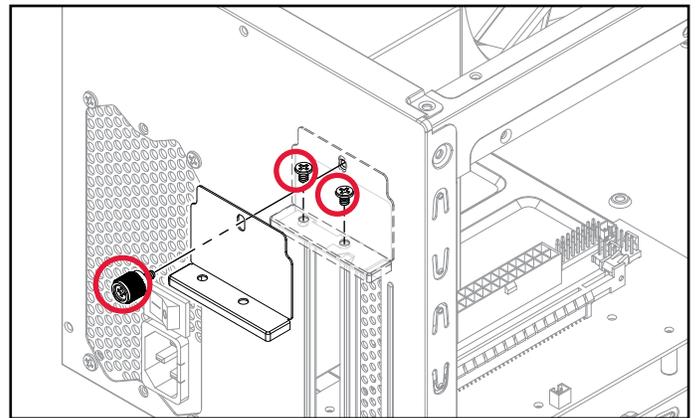
1. Remove the OWC Helios FX from its packaging and set it on a level working surface with the back facing towards you.

2. Remove the three thumbscrews (shown at right) from the back of the device, then set them aside.

3. Grasping the raised portions of the top cover (shown in red), slide the top cover towards you until it stops. Next, lift the top cover straight up, pull the sides apart slightly, then remove the cover and set it aside.
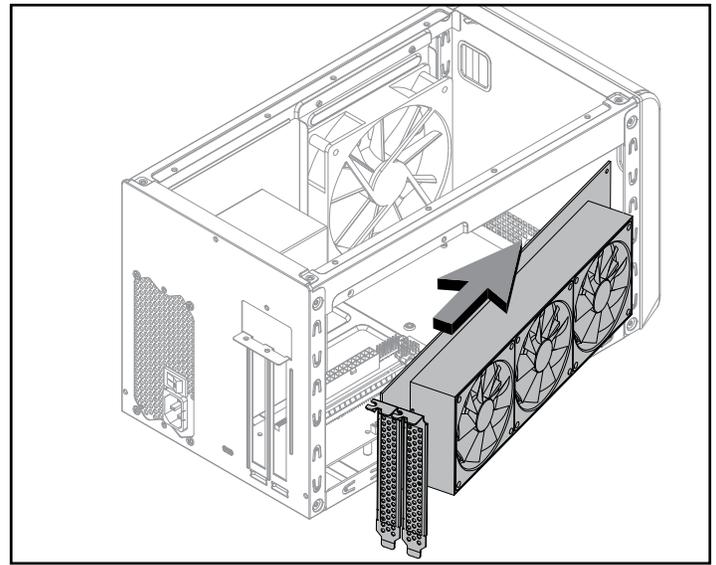

4. Remove the two Phillips screws and the thumbscrew (highlighted in red) that affix the Locking Plate to the chassis, then set them aside.
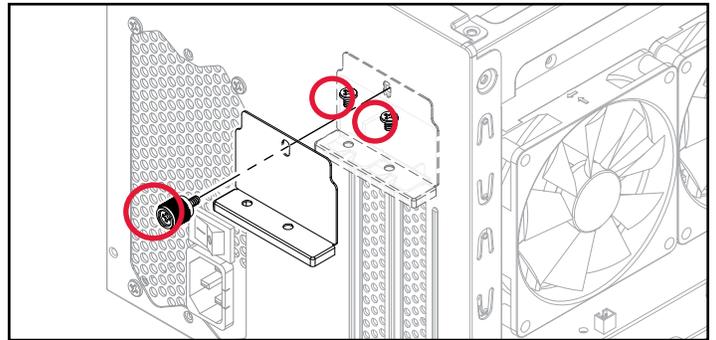

5. Remove one or both PCIe slot covers, depending on the PCIe card requirements, then set the cover(s) aside.

6. Carefully unpack the PCIe card from its box, removing any protective plastic film, sleeves, and port covers from the device.
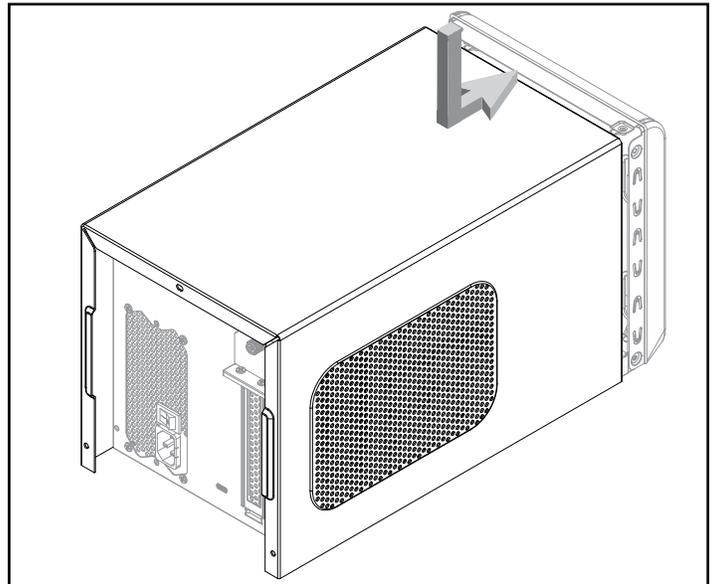
7. Insert the PCIe card into the assembly through the top or side, depending on the card length. The shroud design for some full-length cards may require you to install the card from the side (shown at right), and possibly remove the main fan temporarily in order to insert the card into the chassis.

8. Line up the connector on the card with the PCIe slot, then lower the card into the slot and apply gentle downward pressure to fully seat the card. **IMPORTANT:** do not rock the card when installing it and do not force the card into the slot if you feel resistance. Remove the card, check for obstructions, then carefully re-align the connector on the card and the PCIe slot, and try again.

9. If necessary connect one or both of the auxiliary power cables to the card. Check the PCIe card's documentation to determine if auxiliary power is required and if so, which type of connectors are recommended.

10. Secure the PCIe card bracket (and PCIe slot cover if you installed a single-width card) using the Locking Plate and screws that were removed in Step 4. The card's bracket should be 'sandwiched' between the base of the Locking Plate and the plate itself, before the bracket is affixed using the two Phillips screws and the thumbscrew shown at right.

11. Pull the sides of the top cover apart slightly then lower it onto the inner chassis' top brackets. Push the sides toward one another so that the guides on the cover and the inner chassis engage. Once this is done, slide the top cover all the way forward until it stops.

12. Secure the top cover to the inner chassis with the three thumbscrews you removed in Step 2.

13. Connect the included AC power cable to the Mercury Helios FX and then connect the other end to a wall outlet or power strip. **NOTE:** the Power LED on the front cover will not light up until the computer is powered on, but the LEDs inside the unit will light up anytime it is receiving power. Last, connect the included Thunderbolt 3 cable from the host computer to the Mercury Helios FX. **This completes the assembly process.**

Installing The GPU Driver

IMPORTANT: not all PCIe cards require a driver, but all supported GPUs require the installation of a Thunderbolt-certified driver in order to operate normally. Please consult the GPU manufacturer's documentation to verify driver availability for Mac or Windows PC. Once you've verified drivers are available, download them and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation. For macOS, the drivers for compatible GPUs are provided with the operating system.

Usage Notes & Warnings

- **Apple GPU Support —** We anticipate the number and type of GPUs that Apple officially supports will grow over time. For more information about GPUs and links to related resources, please visit the product web page.

- **Keeping the installed card cool** — the Mercury Helios FX has been optimized for maximum airflow and cooling the installed card, including a temperature-controlled fan. You do not need to apply changes or customizations to the chassis. So long as you do not block any of the vents, compatible cards should remain sufficiently cool during use.

- **Fan operation** —the Helios FX's main fan does not operate when the connected host computer is in Sleep mode or is turned off. The power supply fan will run whenever the box is powered and switched on, even if disconnected from the host computer, or if the host computer is in Sleep mode.

- **GPU power requirements** — the Helios FX supports the power requirements of most but not all GPUs. Please check the product web page for the latest compatibility list.

- **Power LED operation** — The power indicator LED only powers on when the host computer is connected and powered on as well. The LED will power off when the host computer is in Sleep mode.

- **Changing the installed card** — PCIe cards are not hot-pluggable! Never install a PCIe card into the Helios FX while it is connected to a host or power outlet. If you need to swap out the installed card, shut down the host computer, then disconnect the power cord and Thunderbolt cable from the Helios FX before replacing the card.

- **Thunderbolt 3 host performance** — While the Helios FX features a 40Gbps Thunderbolt 3 connection, some host computers equipped with Thunderbolt 3 use a 2-lane PCIe interface. For computers configured in this way, performance of the Thunderbolt 3 connection is limited to 20 Gbps. Please check with the computer manufacturer to determine how many PCIe lanes are available on the host computer's Thunderbolt 3 ports.

- **GPU Performance** — the performance of the Helios FX is defined by the combination of the host computer, the installed GPU, and available Thunderbolt bandwidth. While you may not achieve full desktop performance in all applications, you should see a significant graphics performance boost.

- **Power Delivery** — the Helios FX provides up to 87W of upstream power for charging the host computer. Note that some PC laptops with Thunderbolt 3 do not accept charging from a Thunderbolt peripheral and therefore will see no charging benefit.

- **Identifying Thunderbolt 3 40Gbps cables** — certified Thunderbolt 3 (40 Gbps) cables will have the Thunderbolt 3 logo with the number '3' as well.

- **Operating system updates may change compatibility status** – specific drivers that work under one OS version may not work in a later version. Before upgrading you computer to the latest OS, we recommend that you contact the GPU manufacturer or system provider to verify eGPU compatibility with the OS you plan to use.

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