KARLSRUHE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING PRACTICE WINTER TERM 2015/2016

rootJS - module guide

Node.js bindings for ROOT 6

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1. Introduction

1.1. About this document

This document describes the structure of rootJS, it will be used as a blueprint in the implementation phase.

The document contains descriptions to all public methods, so that the implementation can be split up. It contains all classes that need to be implemented, descriptions to all public methods and, listed in the UML diagram in the appendix, some private functions and properties that might be handy during implementation.

1.2. Overview

When using node modules to extend the basic Node.js API, one uses the *require* statement, providing one has the name of the module. *require* returns a JavaScript object which is called exports, containing everything the node modules decides to include.

In our case require will run the *initialize* method which will go through ROOT to find all globally accessible variables, functions and classes.

For all these items a property or function is being added to the exports object. These properties are bound to a callback function which is equipped with meta data, referring to the property or function in ROOT. With this information the callback function is able to call the actual ROOT functionality.

To send the results to Node.js we need to convert the resulting objects or values. In order to convert the data we will use proxies for the different data types that will be returned by a factory.

The factory will use the data type to determine a matching Proxy implementation, when dealing with non scalar data, the factory will run through all methods and properties and use the Factory recursively.

Even though node programs are mainly used as server applications they can still handle graphical user interfaces(GUI). GUIs need to refresh frequently in order to be responsive. As JavaScript only runs one thread at a time, the GUI refresh needs to run on the same thread as the rest of the application. GUIs are therefore supported as well.

This is handled in the *NodeApplication* class. Furthermore we will set the application name and a callback function for messages generated by ROOT here. The GUI is the only edge case we have identified so far, for which we have to implement the *NodeApplication* class which initiates asynchronous JavaScript user interface refresher.



2. CallbackHandler

The CallbackHandler class gets invoked when an encapsulated ROOT function or object is accessed. The callback functions follow one general pattern, when called from a Node.js program CallbackInfo is provided. In the initialization phase we can save InternalFields which belong to these CallbackInfos. The internal fields are therefore filled with information about the associated ROOT functionality. The callback function uses this information to determine what to do exactly.

An inheritor of *Proxy* will be used to access the data or call the function/constructor and generate a Node.js representation of the value to be returned.

2.1. ctorCallback

Name	CallbackHandler::ctorCallback(args: FunctionCallbackInfo <value>)</value>
Visibility	public
Parameters	args: FunctionCallbackInfo < Value > information about the context
Return value	none
Behavior	Whenever the last parameter passed via JavaScript is a JavaScript function, it will be handled as a callback. The following will be done in a new thread, the result is then being passed as a parameter when the callback is being called.
	This method gets invoked when a constructor function of an encapsulated ROOT class is being called. This method should determine which constructor should be invoked, by checking constructor overloads. This constructor needs to be called and the resulting object needs to be forwarded to the ProxyObjectFactory in order to proxy the results.

2.2. memberGetterCallback

Name	<pre>CallbackHandler::memberGetterCallback(property: Local<string>, info: PropertyCallbackInfo<value>)</value></string></pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	$property:\ Local < String >,\ info:\ Property Callback Info < Value >$
Return value	none
Behavior	Gets invoked when an encapsulated (class) member was requested. The function will not be mapped to a JavaScript function, but to a getter that is being invoked whenever a variable is requested. Therefore we do not need to provide the ability to use callbacks here, as they could not be passed. In addition to that, it should not take long to read a variable.



2.3. memberSetterCallback

Name	<pre>CallbackHandler::memberSetterCallback(property: Local<string>, value: Local<value>, info: PropertyCallbackInfo<value>)</value></value></string></pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	$property: \ Local < String>, \ value: \ Local < Value>, \ info: \ Property Callback-Info < Value>$
Return value	none
Behavior	Gets invoked when an encapsulated (class) member is attempted to be set. The function will not be mapped to a JavaScript function but to a setter that is being invoked when a variable is saved using the "=" operator. Therefore we do not need to provide the ability to use callbacks here, as they could not be passed. In addition to that, it should not take long to write to a variable.

2.4. memberFunctionCallback

Name	<pre>CallbackHandler::memberFunctionCallback(args: FunctionCallbackInfo<value>)</value></pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	$args:\ Function Callback Info < Value>$
Return value	none
Behavior	When the last parameter passed via JavaScript is a JavaScript function, it will be handled as a callback. The following will be done in a new thread, the result is then being passed as a parameter when the callback is being called. This method gets invoked when a method is called. First a method with the correct signature is selected. The selected method will then be called and the result will be sent through the ProxyObjectFactory.



2.5. staticGetterCallback

Name	<pre>CallbackHandler::staticGetterCallback(property: Local<string>, info: PropertyCallbackInfo<value>)</value></string></pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	$property:\ Local < String >,\ info:\ Property Callback Info < Value >$
Return value	none
Behavior	Gets invoked when an encapsulated static property was requested. The function will not be mapped to a JavaScript function, but to a getter that is being invoked whenever a variable is requested. Therefore we do not need to provide the ability to use callbacks here, as they could not be passed. In addition to that, it should not take long to read a variable.

2.6. staticSetterCallback

Name	<pre>CallbackHandler::staticSetterCallback(property: Local<string>, value: Local<value>, info: PropertyCallbackInfo<value>)</value></value></string></pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	$property: \ Local < String>, \ value: \ Local < Value>, \ info: \ Property Callback-Info < Value>$
Return value	none
Behavior	Gets invoked when an encapsulated static property is attempted to be set. The function will not be mapped to a JavaScript function but to a setter that is being invoked when a variable is saved using the $=$ öperator. Therefore we do not need to provide the ability to use callbacks here, as they could not be passed. In addition to that, it should not take long to write to a variable.



2.7. staticFunctionCallback

Name	CallbackHandler::staticFunctionCallback(args:FunctionCallbackInfo <value>)</value>
Visibility	public
Parameters	$args:\ Function Callback Info < Value>$
Return value	none
Behavior	When the last parameter passed via JavaScript is a JavaScript function, it will be handled as a callback. The following will be done in a new thread, the result is then being passed as a parameter when the callback is being called.
	This method gets invoked when a static method is called. First a method with the correct signature is selected. The selected method will be called and the result will be sent through the ProxyObjectFactory.



3. NodeHandler

```
The NodeHandler is the main entry point when you require RootJS by using
```

```
// JavaScript: Load ROOT bindings in JavaScript
var root = require(rootJS.node);
```

// C++: Expose the initialize method as the main entry point ${\tt NODE_MODULE(rootJS,\ initialize)}$

rootJS initialization sequence

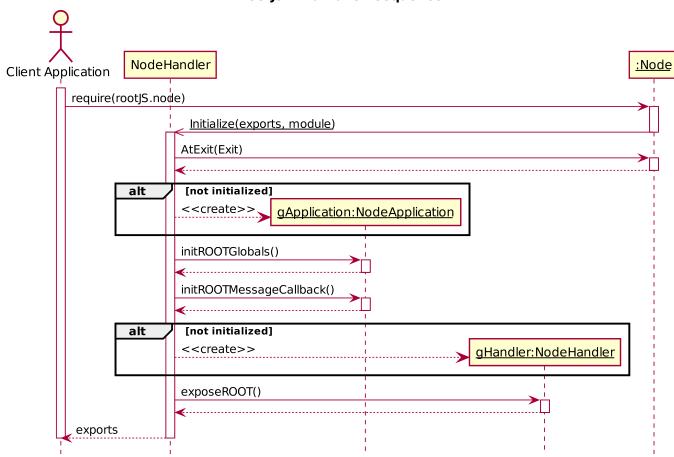


Figure 3.1: initialization sequence

After running the *initialize* method ROOT is fully initialized and all features are exposed to JavaScript.



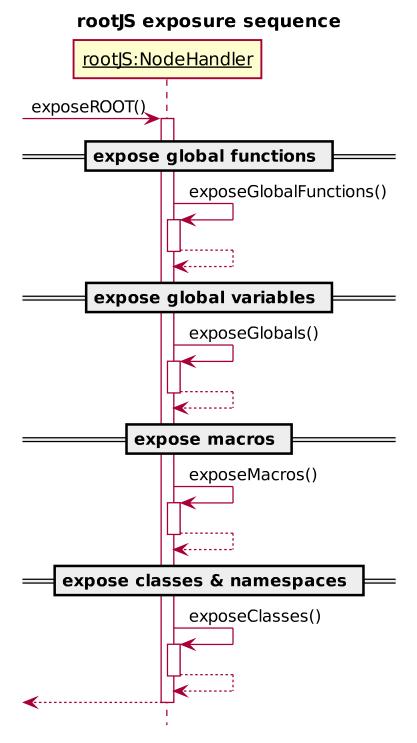


Figure 3.2: class exposure sequence



3.1. initialize

Name	NodeHandler::initialize(exports: Local <object>, module: Local<object>)</object></object>
Visibility	public static
Parameters	exports : Local < Object >, module : Local < Object > parameters passed by Node.JS
Return value	none The features will be exported by passing them to the exports parameter
Behavior	This will create an instance of <i>NodeApplication</i> and store it in gApplication, to ensure that all ROOT functionality that relies on gApplication will function properly. Furthermore this will run <i>getExports</i> to retrieve the features to be exported to JavaScript. This will then be put into the exports object which has been passed to this method

3.2. getExports

Name	NodeHandler::getExports()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	Local <object> features to be exported</object>
Behavior	This method will run multiple private methods to collect global functions, global variables, macros and classes. All these items will be stored in a v8 object which will be passed to RootJS via the initialize method.



4. NodeApplication

ROOT uses TApplication to interface with the windowing system and event handlers. An instance of TApplication is usually stored in the global gApplication variable.

The main problem with using TApplication directly would be, that we could not hook into the InitializeGraphics method. When having a graphical user interface we have update the UI frequently:

gSystem->ProcessEvents();

To avoid having a lot of ProcessEvents calls, we wait until InitializeGraphics has been called at least once.

Furthermore NodeApplication is being used to set the application's name and initialize a custom message callback which can be used to retrieve messages in JavaScript.

4.1. NodeApplication

Name	<pre>NodeApplication::NodeApplication(acn: char*, argc: int*, argv: char**)</pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	acn: char*, argc: int*, argv: char**
Return value	«constructor» An instance of NodeApplication
Behavior	Sets the application's name and constructs a custom message handler



5. TemplateFactory

The TemplateFactory creates JavaScript function templates from a given ROOT class using TClassRef. Methods and static members are set during creation through the use of ROOT reflections and the proxy factories.

5.1. createTemplate

Name	<pre>TemplateFactory::createTemplate(clazz: TClassRef)</pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	clazz: TClassRef the class for which a template is to be created
Return value	Local <functiontemplate> the created template</functiontemplate>
Behavior	Gets the class from TClassRef and creates a new function template. Then it iterates over all static members of the class and sets the corresponding members of the template to respective proxy objects. It then iterates through the functions and also sets them. For further reference consider the sequence diagram on the following page (Figure 5.1).



$\label{prop:continuous} \textbf{FunctionTemplate generation for class exposure}$

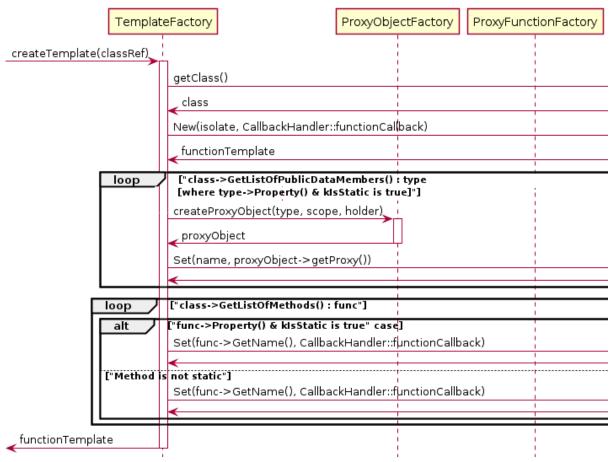


Figure 5.1: function template creation (full diagram in appendix)



6. Proxy

The Proxy class is an abstract class which acts as an intermediary between Node.js and ROOT. Both the ObjectProxy and FunctionProxy inherit the Proxy class. Both of them require the object's or function's $void^*$ address to access the original ROOT object. The TObject type is more accurately specified in each class which inherits Proxy. The TClassRef scope is used to access TClass and the necessary information about the class. The Proxy class holds the data, which both ObjectProxy and FunctionProxy require.

Node.js enables us to set a getter and a setter method by calling v8::ObjectTemplate::SetAccessor, so when a value is assigned to a property, which is encapsulated by the bindings, a setter will be called. This setter will retrieve the Proxy, which has been stored in an internal field which is bound to the JavaScript object. The Proxy is used to write the new data to the specific memory address, after making sure the property is writable.

6.1. Proxy

Name	Proxy::Proxy(address: void*, type: TObject, scope: TClassRef)
Visibility	protected
Parameters	$address:\ void*$ The memory address of the ROOT object
	type: TObject The type of Object will be specified in the subclasses
	scope: TClassRef The reference of the TClass so that it can be accessed
Return value	«constructor» Returns a Proxy with the given parameters as a variables
Behavior	The Proxy constructor will be inherited by both ObjectProxy and Function-Proxy. The created Proxy will have the parameters as variables.

6.2. setAddress

Name	Proxy::setAddress(address: void*)
Visibility	public
Parameters	$address:\ void*$ The address to which the proxied ROOT object should be set to
Return value	none
Behavior	Sets the address of the proxied ROOT object.



6.3. getAddress

Name	Proxy::getAddress()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	void* The current address of the proxied ROOT object
Behavior	Gets the current address of the proxied ROOT object.

6.4. getType

Name	Proxy::getType()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	TObject The current type of the proxied ROOT object
Behavior	Gets the current type of the proxied ROOT object.

6.5. getScope

Name	Proxy::getScope()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	TClassRef The current scope of the proxied ROOT object
Behavior	Gets the current scope of the proxied ROOT object.



6.6. isGlobal

Name	Proxy::isGlobal()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	bool True if the proxied object is global
Behavior	Checks if a global element (not an object member or a static class member) is proxied.

6.7. isTemplate

Name	Proxy::isTemplate()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	bool True if the Proxy is a template
Behavior	Checks if the Proxy is a template, which allows using generic types.

6.8. isConst

Name	Proxy::isConst()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	bool True if the proxied value is a constant
Behavior	Checks if the proxied value is a constant.



6.9. isStatic

Name	Proxy::isStatic()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	bool True if the proxied value is static
Behavior	Checks if the proxied value is static.



7. FunctionProxyFactory

The FunctionProxyFactory creates FunctionProxy objects. It differentiates between ROOT functions that can be overloaded and those that can't be.

7.1. createFunctionProxy

Name	FunctionProxyFactory::createFunctionProxy(function: TFunction, scope: TClassRef)
Visibility	public
Parameters	function: TFunction The ROOT function to be proxied.
	scope: TClassRef The scope of the function.
Return value	FunctionProxy the proxied function
Behavior	A simple method to create <i>FunctionProxy</i> objects for a given function in a given scope. This is used if there is no overloading or a <i>TFunction</i> is given directly.

7.2. from Args

Name	<pre>FunctionProxyFactory::fromArgs(name: string, scope: TClassRef, args: FunctionCallbackInfo)</pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	name: string The name of the ROOT function
	scope: TClassRef The reference to the holding class that is searched for the function
	$args:\ Function Callback Info$ The arguments read from the $Callback Handler$
Return value	FunctionProxy The proxied ROOT function
Behavior	This method is used to deal with overloaded functions, since JavaScript doesn't support it. It searches the given scope for a function with the given names and arguments and throws an exception if nothing is found.



8. FunctionProxy

In order to make ROOT callable functions and methods dynamically accessible within the Node.js application, they need to be proxied. The *FunctionProxy* provides such functionality, as well as acting as a static cache for commonly used *FunctionProxy* objects.

A FunctionProxy instance holds a pointer to the callable function's and method's location in main memory, and reflection data, such as the callable's signature. It also provides functionality to validate parameters and encapsulate them within ObjectProxy instances. The FunctionProxy::call method can then be used to execute the callable using the ObjectProxy instances as parameters. The return value is again encapsulated within an ObjectProxy and returned to the caller.

As JavaScript does not support overloading, but C++ does, the FunctionProxy can be used to statically get all methods with a specified name. The FunctionProxy also maintains a static cache which maps functions and methods to their memory location. This is useful for creating new FunctionProxy instances.

8.1. getCallFunc

Name	FunctionProxy::getCallFunc(method: TFunction*)
Visibility	public
Parameters	method: TFunction*: pointer to the ROOT function for which a proxy is to be created
Return value	CallFunc* a pointer to the CallFunc object provided by cling
Behavior	Gets a pointer to a ${\it CallFunc}$ object, which encapsulates the provided ROOT function in memory.

8.2. getMethodsFromName

Name	<pre>FunctionProxy::getMethodsFromName(scope: TClassRef, name: string)</pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	scope: TClassRef reference to the class which is checked for methods with the specified name
	name: string name of the overloaded methods which shall be returned
Return value	vector <tfunction*> methods that match the specified name</tfunction*>
Behavior	Gets a reference to a class and a method name string. It returns all methods of the class with the specified name. This is needed since JavaScript does not support method overloading.



8.3. FunctionProxy

Name	FunctionProxy::FunctionProxy(address: void*, function: TFunction, scope: TClassRef)
Visibility	public
Parameters	$address:\ void^*$ memory address of the proxied function
	function: TFunction the function's reflection object
	scope: TClassRef the class that the function belongs to
Return value	«constructor» the created FunctionProxy
Behavior	Creates the FunctionProxy.

8.4. getType

Name	FunctionProxy::getType()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	TFunction the <i>TFunction</i> object that contains the function's reflection data
Behavior	Returns the wrapped function's $TFunction$ object. It contains the meta data of its corresponding function.

8.5. validateArgs

Name	FunctionProxy::validateArgs(args: FunctionCallbackInfo)
Visibility	public
Parameters	$\label{eq:args:function} \textit{CallbackInfo} \text{ information about the context of the call, including the number and values of arguments}$
Return value	ObjectProxy[] array of the arguments as proxies
Behavior	Checks whether the function is being called with the proper arguments and wraps them in proxies so they can be used by the call method.



8.6. call

Name	FunctionProxy::call(args: ObjectProxy[])
Visibility	public
Parameters	args: ObjectProxy[] proxies containing arguments for the method
Return value	ObjectProxy proxy for the object returned by the called method
Behavior	Calls the actual method in memory using Cling. The argument object proxies' contents are read and given to the called method.



9. ObjectProxyFactory

The ObjectProxyFactory creates ObjectProxy instances with TDataMember type, TClassRef scope and ObjectProxy holder. It encapsulates ROOT objects recursively for use in JavaScript.

To handle cyclical references we need to maintain a cache of already generated *ProxyObjects*, which will only be valid during object conversion. When an object is cached it will be used instead of creating a new one.

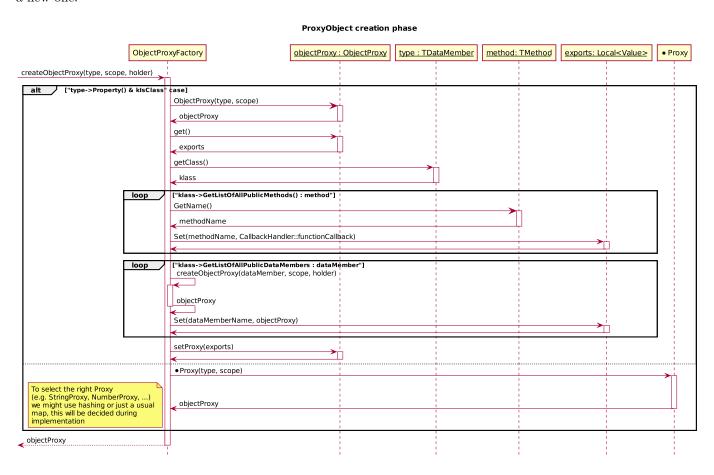


Figure 9.1: object proxy creation sequence



9.1. createObjectProxy

Name	<pre>ObjectProxyFactory::createObjectProxy(type: TDataMember, scope: TClassRef, holder: ObjectProxy)</pre>
Visibility	public
Parameters	type: TDataMember The type identification which the ObjectProxy will have
	$scope:\ TClassRef$ The class the ObjectProxy belongs to
	$holder:\ Object Proxy\ {\bf The\ holder}\ is\ the\ Object Proxy\ which\ will\ encapsulate\ and\ hold\ the\ newly\ created\ Object Proxy$
Return value	ObjectProxy Returns the ObjectProxy which is created with the given parameters.
Behavior	A new ObjectProxy is created each time the createObjectProxy method is called up.



10. ObjectProxy

The *ObjectProxy* class is used to represent ROOT objects. It differentiates between primitive and non-primitive object types.

There are the following implementations of *ObjectProxy*:

- EnumProxy Maps C++ enums to JavaScript strings
- StructProxy Maps C++ structs to JavaScript objects
- ArrayProxy Maps C++ arrays to JavaScript arrays, we cannot enlarge C++ arrays, so we will throw an Exception on overflows
- PointerProxy Maps C++ pointers to JavaScript objects
- NumberProxy Uses a C++ template to map all C++ numbers to JavaScript Numbers
- StringProxy Maps C++ strings and c-strings to JavaScript strings
- BooleanProxy Maps C++ root boolean to Javascript boolean

The ObjectProxyFactory decides which ObjectProxy needs to be instantiated. Internally all these ObjectProxies work the same way by linking a v8::Local with a TDataMember

10.1. ObjectProxy

Name	ObjectProxy::ObjectProxy(type: TDataMember, scope: TClassRef)
Visibility	public
Parameters	type TDataMember The type of the object
	scope TClassRef The reference to the class of the object
Return value	«constructor» the newly constructed ObjectProxy
Behavior	Creates a new ObjectProxy with the given type and scope.

10.2. getType

Name	ObjectProxy::getType()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	TDataMember the type of the ObjectProxy
Behavior	Returns the type of the Object behind the proxy.



10.3. set

Name	ObjectProxy::set(value: ObjectProxy)
Visibility	public
Parameters	value: ObjectProxy the value to set
Return value	none
Behavior	Sets the value of the Object behind the proxy.

10.4. get

Name	ObjectProxy::get()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	Local <value> The value the object has.</value>
Behavior	Returns the value that was set for the object.

10.5. setProxy

Name	ObjectProxy::setProxy(proxy: Local <object>)</object>
Visibility	public
Parameters	proxy: Local < Object > The v8 object which will be proxy of the ROOT object.
Return value	none
Behavior	Sets proxy: Local < Object > to be the proxy of the ROOT object.



10.6. getProxy

Name	ObjectProxy::getProxy()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	Local < Object > The current proxy of the ROOT object.
Behavior	Gets the proxy of the ROOT object.

10.7. isPrimitive

Name	ObjectProxy::isPrimitive()
Visibility	public
Parameters	none
Return value	bool Whether or not the represented object is of a primitive type or not.
Behavior	Returns <i>true</i> if the represented object's type is primitive, <i>false</i> if not.



11. Appendix

rootJS Architecture

11.1. Class diagram

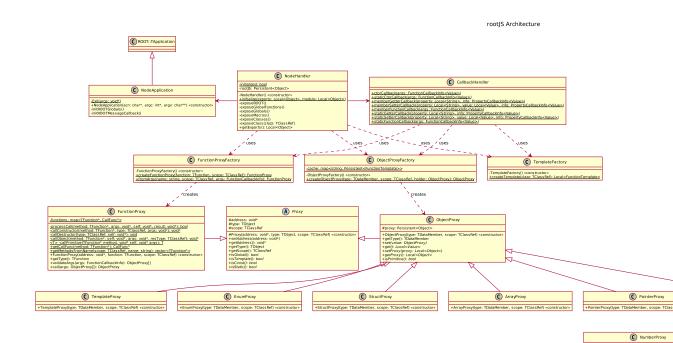


Figure 11.1: rootJS class diagram 1

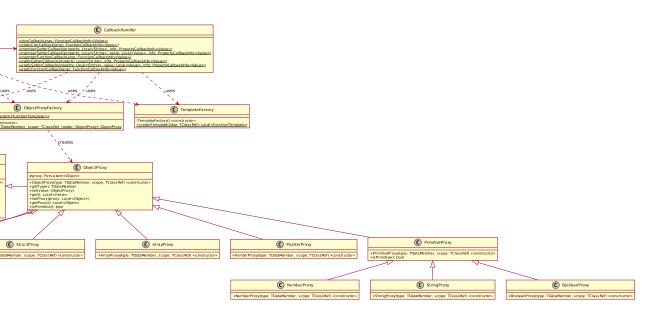


Figure 11.2: rootJS class diagram 2



11.2. Dynamic Model

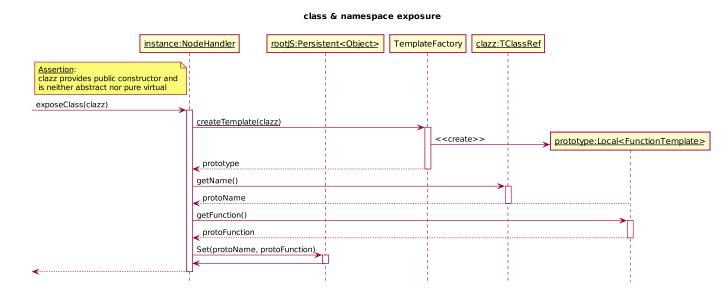


Figure 11.3: class exposure sequence

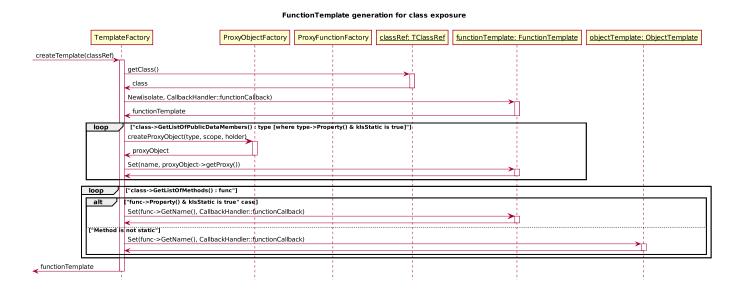


Figure 11.4: class exposure sequence



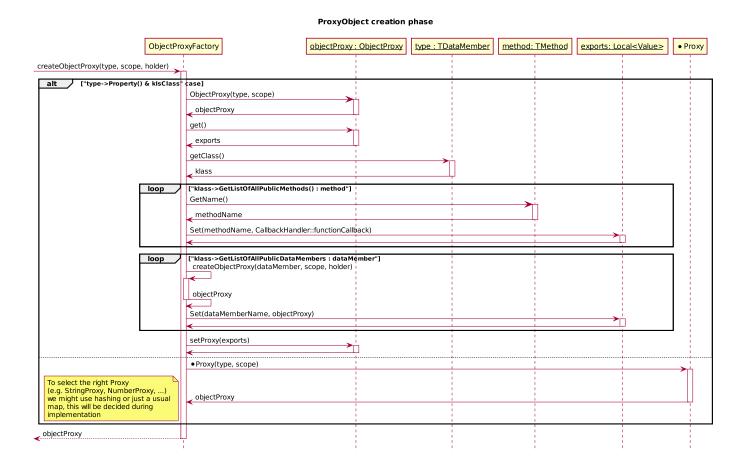


Figure 11.5: ProxyObject creation sequence



11.3. Glossary

Callback

A function which is passed as an argument to some code, which is then expected to call the argument back.

Constructor

A method which is used to create an object.

Encapsulation

A piece of functionality of certain languages used to restrict access to some of the object's variables and methods

Instance

A created object.

Proxy

A class functioning as an intermediary between two classes.

Static

A method which does not require the object to be instantiated.

Template

A feature of C++ that allows classes and functions to operate with generic types.

v8

An open source JavaScript engine, written in C++ and made by Google.