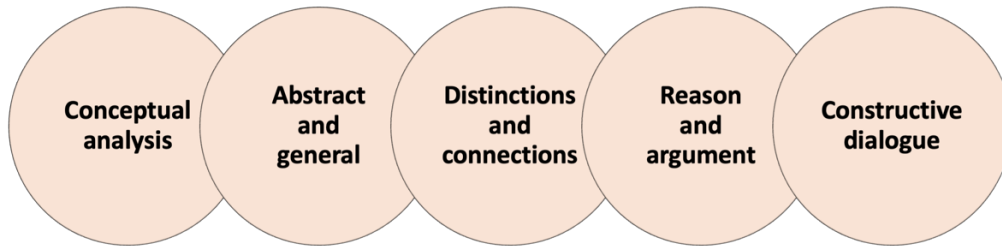


## Reading

- The Philosophy Gym, by Stephen Law (Chapter 9, 'But Is It Art?')
- The Arts Therapies: A Revolution in Healthcare, by Phil Jones
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Ethical Criticism of Art:  
<https://iep.utm.edu/ethical-criticism-of-art/>

## The Philosophy Toolkit



## What is Art?

Can we define art? If so, how would you define art? Here are some proposals from philosophy:

- **Institutional Definitions:** an artwork is an artifact created by an artist to be presented to an art-interested public
- **Aesthetic Definitions:** an artwork is something intended to produce an experience with distinctive aesthetic character (e.g., an experience of beauty).

What should we make of these?

## Mental Health

Creating art can be good for our mental health. Here is an idea about this:

- Creative and artistic activity can help with our mental health as it can be expressive, and function as an outlet or channel to work through what troubles us

But what about if this involves expression of violent imagery or words, of evil or bad characters or actions? Would this make art **immoral**? If so, should we stop producing it?

## Art and Morality

We often *evaluate* things using moral terms: we talk about good or bad **people**, and we talk about good or bad **actions**. There can be morally good or bad **artists**, who perform morally good or bad **actions**. But can we extend this to **works of art themselves**?

- Can there be **morally** good or bad works of art?

If so, what are some of examples of this? And how can we explain this? How is a work of art any different from random objects like tables and chairs that we don't evaluate in moral terms?