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CONTINUUM

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**SIX TIME FEMALE WORLD BOXING CHAMPION FROM MIAMI COMES OUT OF RETIREMENT AT 40 YEARS OLD; BECOMES NUMBER ONE CONTENDER**

Head boxing instructor at the Continuum on South Beach seeks to reclaim her former glory and raise the standard of professional women's boxing

**Miami, FL – August 26th, 2020:** A former six-time World Boxing champion from Miami is making a highly anticipated comeback to the sport at the ripe age of 40 years old, as part of a mission to reclaim the title once hers and raise the caliber of women's professional boxing.

Puerto Rico-born Melissa Hernandez has been living in Miami for the last nine years, building a name for herself as one of the region's most reputable boxing instructors—teaching a hardened class of fitness enthusiasts at the Continuum on South Beach Sporting Club for the last three years. As someone who is self-confessed as “Married to Boxing,” Hernandez now yearns for gold again, since retiring from the sport in 2016 and while keeping a watchful eye on the women rising up the ranks with utmost contempt for whom she considers as “not that great.”

Last year, Melissa re-laced her gloves and returned to her New York gym to resume training at Gleason's in Brooklyn, where she sparred at the height of her career. While considering Miami her home, she regularly travels to New York to train with her eye on the prize, after recently becoming the number one contender for the World WBC Welterweight Title, currently held by American fighter, Jessica McCaskill. With her new Las Vegas-based manager and promotor in New York behind her, Melissa is determined to de-throne the reigning champion when boxing resumes in the wake of COVID-19.

“I decided to retire in 2016 after winning all the titles in my weight class because the purse that came with the glory was ridiculously low,” says Melissa when asked why she threw in the towel. “I decided to return to the sport because I've seen how competitively weak the field has now become and I want to change that. I love working with my classes at the Continuum Sporting Club in Miami Beach and I've seen the passion and hard-working talent that comes from Miami as a city with a strong boxing history. I like pushing the envelope and my body and mind feels just as able as I was ten years ago.”

Melissa moved from Puerto Rico to the Bronx in New York with her family in 1984. Melissa's mother was a scientist and father a psychologist and she attended the Bronx Community College, but dropped out to pursue her love for the arts and a career in film, video and photography after an internship at the Whitney Museum at the age of 15 years old. Melissa wanted to be an editor in film but ended up in the fashion business working for the likes of Patagonia and The GAP in New York City for four years until she was 22 years old.

Melissa admired fellow Puerto Rican boxer, Héctor Camacho, and began hanging-out with friends at a local boxing gym in the Bronx. In 2002 at 22 years old, Melissa started sparring with a trainer who saw tremendous potential and encouraged her to train for participation in the prestigious New York Golden Gloves boxing tournament at Madison Square Garden where she lost in the final. Melissa grew to enjoy her time in the ring and realized she was made for boxing.

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After fighting at the USA Boxing Nationals as an amateur, Melissa became certified by USA Boxing in 2003 to train amateur boxers, but was determined to continue with her own career in Florida where she was scouted by a number of trainers. Melissa continued to hone her boxing skills for a year before moving back to New York City, where she continued her training in the Bronx at The Webster Police Athletic League Center. Melissa won the New York Golden Gloves tournament over two consecutive years in 2004 and 2005 and turned pro in the winter of 2005 under the mentorship of trainer Belinda Laracuenta. Melissa began training as a professional at the renowned Gleason's Gym in Brooklyn and fought her first WBA Junior Welterweight World Title fight against Kelsey Jeffries in 2006. In the same year, Melissa claimed her first title and became the WIBA Super Bantamweight World Champion after beating Lisa Brown in Edmonton, Canada. By 2008, Melissa became the top ranked pound-for-pound fighter in the world and would travel the globe defending her titles and claiming many more along the way, before moving to Florida in 2011 where she would train at the world famous 5th Street Gym in Miami Beach.

After winning six World Boxing titles over a ten-year period, Melissa decided to hang up her gloves in 2016, citing how female boxers were financially being treated unfairly. Over the next several years, Melissa would concentrate on being a successful boxing instructor, teaching at local gyms throughout Miami and building her individual client base for one-on-one instruction. Melissa's elite talent as a boxing instructor was spotted by a fellow trainer who introduced her to the Continuum Sporting Club in Miami Beach, where Melissa would become immensely popular among the residents and homeowners at the luxury beachfront community.

Last year, Melissa resumed her training at Gleason's Gym in New York City in her quest to reclaim the WBC Welterweight title that she hopes will be planned for later this year, after winning her first comeback fight in Louisiana in 2019. Known as Melissa "HuracanShark" Hernandez, her previous titles include: WIBA Super Bantamweight, GBU Lightweight World Title, WIBA Lightweight World Title, WIBA Super Featherweight World Title, WBA Intercontinental Featherweight Title, WIBA Interim Lightweight Title, IBS Light Welterweight World Title, WBC Featherweight World Title and UBF Super Lightweight World Title.

While age 40 is considered old for women's boxing, this doesn't deter Melissa, who wants to continue fighting for another two years until she claims the one or more titles she vows to bring home to Miami. Her long-term plans are to open her own boxing studio while continuing to paint and discover new art galleries in her spare time. Melissa lives in Miami Beach, Florida and is currently single.

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### **About Continuum**

Continuum is South Florida's premier resort-style oceanfront condominium residences, located on the southern-most tip of Miami Beach. Developed by Ian Bruce Eichner's The Continuum Company, LLC, the property includes two towers – the South Tower, which opened in 2000, comprising of 42 floors, and the North Tower, which opened in 2007, comprising of 37 floors. With 26 different residential condominium floor-plans and 5 different townhouse floor-plans offered, amenities at Continuum include two lagoon pools, private patio restaurant, sporting club and spa with state-of-the-art gym and lap pool, Tennis Pavilion with 3 clay courts, indoor parking garage with 24-hour gated security, multiple meeting rooms and a full-time concierge. Continuum provides direct access to the beach and is situated on 12 acres of perfectly manicured oceanfront property, with unobstructed views of the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Continuum represents the largest parcel of beachfront property available in the *South of Fifth* neighborhood of Miami Beach.