Salvo Nicosia, the head of communications of Alberta Ferretti and the ever fashionable gent known on Instagram as The Bearded Publicist, has died at the age of 51.

A uniquely popular figure in the fashion industry, Nicosia passed away in Milan on Thursday night, after spending several days in hospital, according to close friends.

“I am deeply saddened by Salvo’s death, a person with whom I have shared so many important moments in the
I am deeply saddened by Salvo’s death, a person with whom I have shared so many important moments in the recent years. For me and for our company as a whole, this is an extremely dramatic human and professional loss. In this moment of profound sadness, our most sincere thoughts go to Salvo’s family. We will always carry him in our hearts with immense affection,” said Alberta Ferretti, founder of the Aeffe Group and creative director of the eponymous brand, in a statement.

In his highly successful career, Nicosia’s final position was as communications director of the Alberta Ferretti and Pollini collections, a job held from April 2021 until his death. Nicosia had joined the Aeffe Group in 2019 as VIP & celebrities relations director, operating initially from its London headquarters.

“The Aeffe Group is saddened to announce the premature and dramatic passing of Salvo Nicosia,” added the company in the release.

Nicosia’s passing unleashed a wave of comments on his Instagram account. “Too soon dear Salvo. Your kind heart and elder statesmanship will be missed,” wrote designer Peter Dundas. Wrote Jeremy Scott: “REST WELL KIND SOUL.”

“Beautiful memories with you,” commented Francesca Versace; while Karla Otto wrote: "Gentle Soul Buon Viaggio." Designer and stylist Giovanna Engelbert wrote: “I have my heart broken. There are no words. A real gentleman in fashion one of a kind human.” Influencer and photographer Johannes Huebl commented: “Salvo, we love you so much. You are gone too soon - so blessed to have had you in our lives. Rest in Peace.”

Salvo, as he was universally known, first sprung to prominence during an 11-year stint as group celebrity director of Dolce & Gabbana. His sense of humour and discretion earned him the title in Hollywood of ”The ‘And’ in ‘Dolce & Gabbana’," as he skilfully represented the Milanese brand internationally.

Subsequently, he spent eight years at powerhouse agency Karla Otto, ending up as their celebrity major-domo and events vice president. Blessed with a diplomatic touch and a wry wit, Nicosia always seemed magically able to calm the iratest of imperial editors who populate fashion runway shows and parties. Studies in the political science department of Florence University in his youth clearly proving useful in the egomaniacal world of fashion.

In his final days, he returned to his homeland in Italy, living in Milan to oversee Alberta Ferretti communications.

Easily recognizable by his poetic beard, Nicosia had long been a noted figure and perennial presence at all gala events from Cannes to California. A naturally elegant dresser, Nicosia was also a social media star, amassing over 150,000 followers to his @thebeardedpublicist account.

Diminutive yet dynamic, elegant in matters of style and syntax, multi-lingual and prodigiously charming Nicosia will be sorely missed by his legions of friends and colleagues. Those who knew and loved him will remember great moments of glory.

Macte virtute sic itur astra.

By Godfrey Deeny